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SPECIAL ISSUE

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INDIA TODAY

Best States of India

NEW WINNERS IN OUR EXCLUSIVE ANNUAL **STATE OF THE STATES** SURVEY AND RANKINGS ON 12 KEY DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS. PLUS, A NEW HAPPINESS INDEX

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VISIT…

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YOGI ADITYANATH LIGHT

Just after reaching at the helm of affairs in Uttar Pradesh in March 2017, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath started reviewing all departments. Yogi Adityanath gave clear directions to all departments that they should prepare their schemes while keeping in mind the welfare of the poor and deprived. The Chief Minister himself saw the presentation of these schemes and made necessary changes. Under the supervision of Yogi Adityanath these departments worked on war footing and prepared the model of welfare schemes for the poor and deprived. In this way a new era started in Uttar Pradesh in which hundred percent benefits of the government schemes were ensured for poor and deprived people. That is the reason; Uttar Pradesh has emerged as an example in the country in implementation of all the Central and state government's schemes running for poor people.

Jungle Tikonia number 3. A village in Kusumhi forest area of Gorakhpur district. Here everyone eagerly waits for Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the Diwali festival. The tradition of celebrating Diwali with Vantangia people, who are the most deprived section of the society, started around two and half decades ago by then MP and Gorakshpeeth heir Yogi Adityanath. The tradition continued even when Yogi Adityanath became the Chief Minister. For Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath the Diwali festival starts from this village itself. This time also, on 4th November on the occasion of Diwali, Chief Minister was himself present among the people of Vantangia village to celebrate the festival. The credit of bringing the Vantangia community to the mainstream of development goes to Yogi Adityanath who gave citizenship to the community which was neglected and deprived for the last hundred years. Even after independence no government paid attention to the Vantangia community. These people did not have basic facilities like houses, electricity, roads, water and land for agriculture. Even they did not have the right to select their own village Pradhan. Just after becoming Chief Minister in 2017 Yogi Adityanath announced to give the status of revenue villages to the Vantangia villages and the benefit of all government schemes. Today here every family has his own house, toilet and lease of the land for agriculture. They are also getting the benefit of different pension schemes.

GOT THE BENEFIT OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

During his 4.5 years tenure as chief minister, Yogi Adityanath has covered Vantangia villages with several facilities including house, road, electricity, water, school, street light, anganwadi centres and RO water machines. Today in Vantangia villages everyone has his own house under chief minister housing scheme, land for agriculture, Aadhar Card, ration card and LPG gas. Children study in schools. Eligible persons are getting the benefit of old age, divyang and widow pension schemes. If you talk about the Tikonia number 3 village, its achievement against the target in every scheme is hundred percent. In this village which has a population of around 450 families, 380 families have antyodaya cards. Out of the 423 families listed for government housing, each and every family has got the benefit of the Chief Minister housing scheme. There are 458 personal toilets also. 600 people have MGNREGA job card which is 100% achievement against target. All identified eligible people are getting benefit of different kind of pension schemes. The village also has government primary school and junior High school along with an Anganwadi centre.

FREE RATION TO 15 CRORE PEOPLE

During Deepotsav festival in Ayodhya on 3rd november, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced free distribution of ration and oil to the 15 crore beneficiaries of the state till March next year. He reiterated this announcement among Vantangiya people on the occasion of Diwali on 4th November. People are currently

ING LIVES OF DEPRIVED

getting free ration from the Central Government till November month. The state government is going to arrange the ration from the period of December to March. During this period eligible card holders will get 1 kg of pulses, 1 kg edible oil and 1 kg salt along with the regular ration. Antyodaya card holders will get additional 1kg sugar. After the directions of the Chief Minister, smart classes are also starting at a composite school in Jungle Tikonia number 3. On Diwali the Chief Minister Yogi inspected the demo of smart class in the school.

SOCIAL SECURITY TO THE WORKERS

After directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state government has decided to implement the Chief Minister accident insurance scheme to provide social security to the registered workers of unorganised sector in the state. The main aim of the scheme is to provide financial help to the registered workers in case of disability due to accident and to the families of registered workers of unorganised sector who die in any accident. A government order in this regard has been issued by the additional chief secretary of the labour department. Under the Chief Minister accident insurance scheme, a maximum of 2 lakh rupees will be given as the assistance to the workers who died or became disabled. The assistance will be given in six categories and the expenses will be borne by the State Government. At present, the number of unorganized sector workers in the state is close to 4.5 crores which is almost 21 percent of the state population. There is a provision in section -3(4) of unorganised workers social security Act 2008, under which the state government can prepare a suitable welfare scheme for workers of the unorganised sector. Under this provision, the state government has decided to implement the Chief Minister accident insurance scheme.

EVERYONE'S DEVELOPMENT IN YOGI GOVERNMENT

Marriages of more than 1 lakh 52 thousand brides of poor families solemnized under Chief Minister Samuhik Vivah Yojana. Financial assistance also increased from 36000 to 51000 rupees.

The old age pension increased from 400 rupees to 500 rupees per month. Till date 55 lakh 77 thousand old people benefited

No upper age limit restriction for destitute women pension. 29 lakh 44 thousand destitute women getting pension of 500 rupees per month.

Pension for disabled increased from 300 rupees to 500 rupees. 11 lakh 18 thousand 808 divyang people getting monthly pension.

Distribution of artificial limbs and associated equipment to 177971 physically disabled. Financial assistance for marriage given to 3327 divyangs.

Benefits of Chief Minister Kanya sumangala Yojana to more than 9 lakh 91thousand girls. Yogi government allocated 1200 crore rupees for the scheme.

Financial assistance of 75000 rupees for maximum two girl children of registered construction labourers (Male and Female). Till date 61805 beneficiaries.

104859 women benefited from one stop centres established in all 75 districts for the help of women affected from violence.

Provision of cycle under sant Ravidas education assistance scheme to the daughters of construction labourers who have cleared 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th class exam.

New courts will form for fast disposal of the cases registered under schedule caste/ tribe atrocities redressal act 1989.

1000 rupees per month pension to the labourers who complete 60 years of age. Till date registration of more than 1 crore labourers.

103 Pandit Dindayal Upadhyay Government Aashram System Schools are running in the state. Construction of Atal Residential Schools in all 18 divisions.

CM Yogi during Deepotsav in Ayodhya

YOGI GAVE GLOBAL IDENTITY TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF UTTAR PRADESH

The Yogi Adityanath government, who earned the confidence of everyone, has not only completed its sacred resolution of Ram Janmabhoomi but also constructed a new Ayodhya. In the last 4 and half years Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has given many grand gifts to Ayodhya. Every single person who became part of the 5th grand deepotsav in Ayodhya on 3rd November could easily see the reality of the Yogi government's popular statement on Ayodhya that they did what they said. At the beginning of the Deepotsav program, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Ram Katha park and saw a presentation of Shri Ram Leela in Ayodhya. In these presentations, the cultural troops from Sri Lanka performed Shri Ram Leela. After which, a splendid performance was presented by artists of Shri Ram Kala Kendra Delhi on the theme of Shri Ram Rajyabhishek. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath started the fifth edition of Deepotsav by lighting the earthen lamps at Ram ki paidi in Ayodhya. On the occasion he performed aarti of the river Sarayu. This year another world record was created by lighting more than 9 lakh earthen lamps at Ram ki paidi during Deepotsav. So in this way, historical and unique scenes reminiscing the memories of treta yug became real during the grand and spectacular event of Deepotsav in Ayodhya. The grandeur of Ayodhya clad with Diyas and lights was incredible and splendid. The city of lord Rama reverberated with the sound of mantras and bhajans of prabhu Ram. The sound of divine conch and exclamation of Jay Shri Ram along with glimpses of age old traditions and folk culture were seen during the event. The spectacular 3D holographic show, projection mapping and laser show based on the theme of Ramayana spellbounded devotees present there.

THE WORLD SAW A NEW AYODHYA

The Ayodhya city which was otherwise neglected during the tenure of previous governments, catapulted on world level by Yogi Adityanath government in just 4 and half years. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath transformed Ayodhya by organising a grand program on Diwali and its impact can be seen not just in the state but also across the country. Today the city of Ayodhya, illuminated on the map of the country, is developing in tandem with technology. The development saga of new Ayodhya includes the airport in the name of Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram, Raja Dashrath medical College, High tech bus station, flyovers, transformation of old temples along with the construction of grand Ram temple. Not just the people of Ayodhya but millions of Ram Bhakt connected virtually to Deepotsav and witnessed the historic and spectacular moments of the grand deepotsav which gave the feeling of treta Yug in the city. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath again showed his commitment to the development of Ayodhya in a Rapid way. Giving a grand gift to the city on the occasion of 5th deepotsav Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched 50 development projects worth 661 crore rupees. Along with it a special postal stamp in joint collaboration of the postal department and Avadh University was inaugurated.

FOCUS ON CULTURAL TOURISM

Yogi Adityanath government is working swiftly to enhance the possibilities of tourism in Uttar Pradesh. The places in districts having religious, historical and archaeological importance are being given a new look. By developing religious places with an approach of enhancing tourism, the Yogi government gave them international recognition. In the last four and half years, the Yogi government gave new identity to the archaeological, cultural, religious places and forest areas which are situated in backward districts. The ropeway started functioning in Vindhyachal while the work on construction of the ropeway in Barsana of Mathura district is also going on swiftly. Places related to Shakti peeth circuit and spiritual circuit are being developed. Tourism facilities are being enhanced in Agra and Fatehpur Sikri under Jain and Sufi circuit. To increase

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Kashi Vishwanath corridor being constructed in Varanasi

CM Yogi with the certificate of Guinness Book of World records after lighting a record number of earthen lamps during Deepotsav.

the possibilities of tourism, the government constituted Naimisharanya tirth Kshetra Vikas Parishad, Chitrakoot tirth Kshetra Vikas Parishad and Devi Patan tirth Vikas Parishad. In these areas development work is going on swiftly and the facilities are also being increased at tourist places. The Yogi government wants to increase the number of tourists at such places by transforming them. There is a grand plan to promote business and handicraft in these areas to generate employment. Once the government will promote these areas in the field of tourism then all major pilgrimage places and sidhpeeths will make their mark on world level. This is the result of the government's policy to promote tourism that first time large scale work has been started to conserve and beautify the religious places in all big and small districts.

KUSHINAGAR GOT NEW IDENTITY

With the inauguration of Kushinagar international airport on 20th October by Prime Minister Narendra Modi the place which witnessed the journey of lord Buddha from enlightment to Mahaparinirvan connected directly to the whole world. The landing of srilankan airlines in Kushinagar on this occasion is a kind of salute to the sacred land. To give Kushinagar a new identity at international level, the Yogi government has also constructed an international bus station in the kasya area of Kushinagar. The tourist can get bus services for metro cities like Delhi and Mumbai and also to Nepal from this bus station. For the security and convenience of the tourists Yogi government has taken historical steps. First time tourist police have been deployed in Kushinagar. To provide quality food to the tourist food plaza has also been opened in Kushinagar. This will not only increase the avenues of employment at ground level but the number of tourists has also increased. The followers of Buddhism find a new attachment to the city with the starting of light and sound shows and they have started staying here for a long period.

RESPECT TO THE SPIRITUAL BELIEFS IN YOGI GOVERNMENT

Grand Culmination of world's biggest cultural Pride Prayagraj Kumbh 2019 with laurels from UNESCO. Participation from a record 230 million devotees.

Beautification work of places related to Martyrs going on along with construction of zoo, water sports complex Ramgarh tal and beautification of Gorakhnath temple.

Braj tirth Vikas Parishad has started development projects worth 346 crore rupees for Vrindavan and Mathura. Holi celebration at Vrindavan became famous at international level.

The grandeur of Kashi Vishwanath temple has increased manifold with the construction of Kashi Vishwanath corridor in Varanasi. Now the temple is directly connected with the Ganga river.

The subsidy for Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage has increased from 50 thousand rupees to 1 lakh rupees per person. Subsidy on Sindhu Darshan increased to 20 thousand rupees per person.

Chauri Chaura Centennial festival organised at Gorakhpur. Sant Kabir academy established at maghar. construction of auditorium with capacity of 50000 people in Gorakhpur.

Places in Bundelkhand like Ranipur wildlife sanctuary, Sabari and Raghav waterfalls, Amravati and mark and aashram are becoming important centres for eco tourism.

Grand celebration of Uttar Pradesh Divas on 24th January. Felicitation of those famous personalities who contributed significantly in different sectors.

State government is developing new centres for tourism by giving heritage tree status to the old trees related with spiritual events, historic occasions and with popular beliefs.

Tourist Police stations are being opened for the security of tourists at the major tourist points of state. Model tourism police station has opened in Ayodhya.

The famous religious places of the state like Ayodhya Mathura Kashi Gorakhpur and Prayagraj will be developed as model solar cities in terms of clean and green energy by 2024.

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> “Yogiji saved the lives of thousands of children by curbing the spread of encephalitis. This kind of work happens when the government is sensitive and has the feeling and compassion to feel the pain of poor people.
>
> **— Narendra Modi,**
> **Prime Minister of India**

BOOMING HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE IN YOGI ADITYANATH GOVERNMENT

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken a leap in health services to deal with pandemic like COVID-19 in future. Before formation of Yogi Adityanath government in March 2017 there were only a dozen of medical colleges in state and the number has increased manifold now. CM Yogi Adityanath brought a big change in the health infrastructure of the state. Not only the infrastructure is being developed but the number of doctors and beds are also increasing. In last four and half years 16 government medical colleges have been constructed in the state which has largest population in the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated 9 medical colleges in devriya, Etah, Fatehpur, Gazipur, Hardoi, Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Pratapgarh and Siddharthnagar districts on 25th October which were built at a cost of 2329 crore rupees. From Siddharth Nagar, a place famous for Lord Buddha, The Prime Minister gave a booster dose of health services to the state. Uttar Pradesh is the only state in the country to launch 9 medical colleges at one go. The revolutionary effort of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who is committed to bring the state to the number one position in health infrastructure and medical education, gave a gift of more than 3000 bedded hospitals and 900 seats of MBBS to the state in a single day. The Yogi government is providing medical facilities in every district with a motto of 'one district one medical College'. 7 new medical colleges were set up by Yogi Adityanath government between 2017 and 2021 while 9 more medical colleges added to the tally on 25th October. Apart from it the process is going on to open 14 new medical colleges. Districts like Amethi, Auraiya, Bijnor, Bulandshahar, Chandauli, Gonda, Kanpur dehat, Kaushambi, Kushinagar, Lakhimpur khiri, Lalitpur Pilibhit,Sonbhadra and Sultanpur will get medical colleges by 2022-23. The construction work is going on in these districts. Applications have been asked to open medical colleges on PPP model in the remaining 16 districts. State has 30 private medical colleges and apart from it, Central institutions like AIMS are there at Raebareli, BHU and Gorakhpur along with Aligarh medical college.

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF BEDS AND DOCTORS

After 2017, 4592 seats of MBBS and postgraduate have increased in government and private medical colleges. Out of these, 3588 are of MBBS and 304 seats are of postgraduate courses. Apart from it 100 students each are studying MBBS in AIIMS Raebareli and Gorakhpur. Prior to 2017, 1840 MBBS seats were there in government medical colleges which has now increased to 3828 seats. It means in the last four and half years there is an increase of 1988 seats in MBBS courses. In the same manner 1600 seats have increased in private medical colleges and the total number of seats has increased from 2550 to 4150. There is an incredible increase in the number of specialist doctors also. Till 2017 only 741 seats of PG courses were there in the state which has now become 1027 that means an increase of 286 seats. There is an increase in the PG seats in private medical colleges also. Before 2017 there were 603 PG seats which has now reached 1064, which means an increase of 461 seats. The number is bound to increase from next session also. Earlier there were 120 seats in DM and MCH courses and after an increase of 57 seats it has now reached 177. Apart from it 3000 beds have also increased in medical colleges.

EMPLOYMENT TO THOUSANDS OF YOUTH

For the treatment of general public, Appointment of 459 faculty, 216 senior residents, 402 junior residents along with 460 paramedical staff and 225 nurses has been completed in medical colleges of 9 districts

including Deovria, Etah, Fatehpur, Gazipur, Hardoi, Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Pratapgarh and Siddharth Nagar. Overall 6165 youth got employment in these medical colleges. Apart from it thousands of people have got direct or indirect employment in new medical colleges. More than 90% posts of the faculty have been filled in 9 new medical colleges and there is 100 percent appointment on the post of resident doctors.

VENTILATORS INCREASED 15 TIMES IN ONE AND HALF YEAR

Yogi Adityanath government has increased the number of ventilators in hospitals to 15 times in the last one and half year while the oxygen concentrators have increased 30 times. According to the health department there were 225 ventilators in the state before the spread of COVID-19 while the number of these ventilators has increased to 3424 in the period starting from COVID-19 infection to till date. In the same way the number of oxygen concentrators before COVID-19 infection were 587 which have now increased to 19394. While the number of beds in the state was 63240 earlier, now there are 71970 beds availabale. In a state with an estimated population of 24 crore, the government is working on one district one medical college policy and expanding the facility of BSL-2 lab, CT scan unit, dialysis unit and other medical facilities at war footing.

BONANZA OF AYUSH UNIVERSITY

Till date Uttar Pradesh had different institutions for Ayurveda, Unani homeopathy, naturopathy, yoga and Siddha which are called Ayush collectively. But now the study of all these Ayush methods will be conducted in a single campus of the first Ayush University situated at Pipari in Bhatahat area of Gorakhpur district. President Ramnath Kovind laid the foundation stone of this University on 28th August. The university being built with the cost of Rs 299 crore in 52 acre areas will start running its classes from March 2023. Currently 94 colleges are running various courses of Ayush and they are affiliated with different universities and institutions in the state. Very soon 67 colleges of Ayurveda (8 Government and 58 private) along with 15 colleges of Unani (2 Government and 13 private) and 12 colleges of homeopathy (9 Government and 3 private) will be affiliated with Ayush University. With this affiliation there will be similarity in the course curriculum of degree and diploma courses in these colleges and regulation of the session will also become easy.

HEALTH SERVICES BECAME EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS

Uttar Pradesh effectively controlled the spread of COVID-19 with proper implementation of tracing, testing, treatment and vaccination policy. Not a single infection case in most of the districts of state.

Till date more than **15** crore covid vaccine doses have been administered in the state. More than **4.5** crore people have got the security cover by getting both doses of covid vaccine.

The target has been set to vaccinate **25** to **30** lakh people per day in the coming **2** months. Abolishing the rule of booking online slot for the first dose and by adopting the cluster **2.0** policy, the government is accelerating the vaccination drive.

170 National mobile medical units working in **53** districts of state have been alerted. A senior doctor along with a pharmacist, one lab technician and a staff nurse always remain available in this unit.

Before COVID-19 pandemic there were **25** oxygen plants in the state and the number has been increased to **528** out of which **415** plants are functional now. The state has **1000** metric ton more oxygen availability than the requirement.

Health ATMs are being established in villages, small towns and urban areas in order to provide better health facilities to the citizens of the state. In these ATM's health of the people will be tested on different parameters with the help of high tech machines.

A **100** bedded ICU has been prepared for children in all medical colleges of the state. **100** bedded ICU at every division level and **25** bedded ICU at district hospitals are being prepared.

For improvement of the health of malnourished children under the age of five in the state, a special campaign was launched from 1st July to 30th September by the department of integrated child development services ICDS. This initiative is being taken to eliminate malnourishment in children and mothers.

Emphasis is being given on availability of high tech medical equipment in **3022** primary health centers, **855** community health centers and **592** urban primary health centers. Special focus was on maintenance of equipment, activities, and availability of manpower.

97 sugar Mills and other units of the state produced around **3** crore lliter sanitizer during the second wave of covid. The sanitizer produced in sugar mills of Uttar Pradesh is being supplied across the state from Laddakh to Kerala and other parts of the country.

A BIG LEAP IN SCHEMES UNDER DOUBLE ENGINE GOVERNMENT

PRADHANMANTRI KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI

37521 crore rupees has been transferred into account of **2** crore **53** lakh **98** thousand farmers of the state. Uttar Pradesh has been felicitated for best performance in the country in implementation of the scheme.

PRADHANMANTRI MUDRA YOJANA

Banks provide loans of **50** thousand to **10** lakh rupees for small business and enterprises under the scheme. More than **1** crore **89** lakh entrepreneurs got the benefit of the scheme in UP.

PRADHANMANTRI JAN DHAN YOJANA

Under the scheme **7** crore **2** lakh accounts were opened in Uttar Pradesh. State became number one in the country in implementation of the scheme.

ATAL PENSION SCHEME

After reaching the age of **60**, provision of **1000** to **5000** per month pension as per the contribution. Uttar Pradesh gave benefit of the scheme to **36** lakh **60** thoy **615** people which is highest in the country.

PRADHANMANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA

Target is to provide LPG gas connections to every individual family in the villages by 2022. UP distributed the highest number of **1** crore **67** lakh free of cost LPG gas connections.

PRADHANMANTRI AAWAS YOJANA

The target is to give **3** crore houses in rural areas and **2** crore houses in urban areas to the poor and downtrodden people of the country by 2022. More than **42** lakh houses have been constructed/ approved in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh which is highest in the country.

SWACCH BHARAT ABHIYAN

Till date **2** crore **61** lakh ijjat Ghars/ toilets constructed in Uttar Pradesh. All **75** districts of the state declared open defecation free.

NAMAMI GANGE PARIYOJNA

For the cleanliness and continuous flow of Ganga river **22** projects have completed and worked on **24** projects under Namami gange pariyojana is going on in Uttar Pradesh.

KAUSHAL BHARAT YOJANA

The aim of the scheme is to promote new entrepreneurs in every sector of business in the country. Till date **3400** startup projects have been initiated in Uttar Pradesh.

START UP INDIA, STAND UP INDIA

The aim of the scheme is to promote new entrepreneurs in every sector of business in the country. Till date **3400** startuo projects have been initiated in Uttar Pradesh.

AYUSHMAN YOJANA

Out of **1.18** crore poor families, around **6** crore **47** lakh people have got health security cover of a maximum of **5** lakh rupees in Uttar Pradesh.

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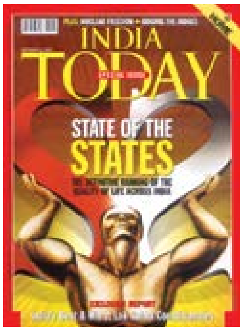
FROM THE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Ashoka Chakra in the centre of India's tricolour and at the base of the state emblem could well be a metaphor for its federal structure. The 24 spokes in the wheel are linked to and support the hub—the Centre. Neither can work without the other. Similarly, unless India's states do well, the country cannot move forward. There is today perhaps a greater understanding of our federal structure. Seven and a half years back, a state chief minister, Narendra Modi, won the Lok Sabha election on the back of the development model for his state. Prime Minister Modi, interestingly, has five former chief ministers in his cabinet, some of whom have administered a few of India's largest states. One of the PM's principal challengers in the opposition today is another state chief minister—Mamata Banerjee.

INDIA TODAY
India's BEST and worst STATES

May 19, 2003



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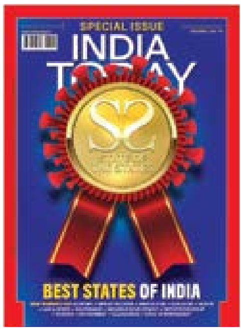

December 7, 2020

Politics aside, many of India's states are now competing with each other to attract investment and improve their performance. This is a heartening development, more so for us at INDIA TODAY, because this is the 19th year of our annual State of the States (SoS) survey conducted by MDRA. Over the years, the study has emerged as an accurate progress report of Indian states. A comprehensive and credible benchmark for assessing a state's socio-economic development, it has also constantly evolved in scope and methodology.

Very often, the results of our survey generate considerable debate and are challenged. We are clear that we are not conducting a political survey or judging the performance of a particular regime. We evaluate the all-around development of a state on 12 parameters: Economy, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Health, Education, Law & Order, Governance, Inclusive Development, Entrepreneurship, Tourism, Environment and Cleanliness. This year, we have added a 13th parameter—the Happiness Index.

Looking at these parameters, you will see that our survey has never been input-oriented but is outcome-oriented. It is based on hard data gleaned from multiple categories to build a development dashboard. We have structured our parameters to offset the advantages of history and geography that certain states may enjoy over others. In education, for instance, we look at total dropout rates, the ratio of boys to girls, and school infrastructure. In health, we look at infant mortality, hospital to bed ratios, and the distance of hospitals from the public. These are hard criteria developed by our researchers and which we have evolved over time.

To avoid giving undue advantage to states with a legacy of performance or under-achievement, the evaluation is conducted under two broad groups—best performing and most improved. The best performing category examines the absolute numbers for the latest year for which data is available. The most improved category examines states' progress over the past five years.

The significance of this distinction is best reflected in the results of this year's SoS study. Based on its progress in the past five years, Bihar has emerged as the most improved big state overall, jumping from ninth rank last year to the top position now. A superlative improvement in education, agriculture, economy and infrastructure has made this possible. The state has overtaken last year's winner, Assam.

Southern states Tamil Nadu and Kerala are among the top five best performing big states. Himachal Pradesh has done well on health, as its vaccination drive has shown us; Punjab is the best performer in cleanliness and agriculture; Kerala has topped the environment and health categories as well as the happiness index; Uttar Pradesh has scored well on law and order and entrepreneurship. Among the small states, Puducherry has overtaken Goa as the best performer overall.

Certain other states have done uniformly well in both historical and recent performances. Gujarat ranks fourth among the big states in both the best performing and most improved categories; Sikkim is third in both categories among small states. Mizoram ranks second in the most improved category, and does reasonably well in fourth place in the best performing category.

I congratulate the winners of this year's SoS survey. For those who haven't won, there's always the next time. But win they must, for when the states win, India wins.

(Aroon Purie)

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BEST STATES OF INDIA

The winners in our annual rankings of Indian states on 12 key development parameters. Plus, a new Happiness Index

Illustration by **NILANJAN DAS**

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भगवान बिरसा मुंडा
जनजातीय गौरव दिवस
15 नवम्बर

Janjateeya Gaurav Diwas

Government's resolve for tribal welfare, honour and pride

> "India celebrated the first 'Janjateeya Gaurav Diwas' in true sense after independence; building a self-reliant India is not possible without tribal participation"
>
> **- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi**

On the basis of the important decision of the Government of India, on 15th November, the First Janjateeya Gaurav Diwas (Tribal Pride Day) was celebrated on a large scale at Jamboori Maidan in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh and the contribution of tribal society in 'Bharat Nirman' or building of the country was conveyed to the masses. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was present as the chief guest. Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Shri Modi on this occasion, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has restored tribal pride in India. The decision to celebrate the birth anniversary of Lord Birsa Munda on 15th November every year as Tribal Pride Day all over India is historic."

Madhya Pradesh government organised this Tribal Pride Day in which a large number of tribal people of the state participated.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched various schemes of tribal welfare on this occasion and said that there is a huge potential for development in tribal areas and it is not possible to build a self-reliant India without tribal participation. In the programme, he handed over keys to the drivers of ration vehicles by launching the "Ration Aapke Gram" (Ration in your village) scheme, which is being implemented in 74 development blocks of 16 districts. Besides, while launching the Sickle Cell Disease Eradication Mission, genetic counselling cards were also provided to the beneficiaries. In the programme, Prime Minister Shri Modi also performed the virtual Bhumi Pujan of 50 Eklavya Adarsh (Model) Residential Schools.

In Madhya Pradesh a total of 20 lakh tribal people have been given leases of forest land. Along with this, the Madhya Pradesh government has also validated 34,000 claims under the Forest Rights Act after re-examining them. Continuous efforts are being made for the education and skill development of tribal students and in this sequence 750 Eklavya residential model schools are being opened and the foundation stone of 50 schools was laid in this programme. Door-to-door drinking water is being supplied to 30 lakh households of Madhya Pradesh under Jal Jeevan Mission and most of these beneficiaries belong to tribal communities.

The Prime Minister said that positive changes have been made in the mineral policy. Tribals have started getting benefits from mining of minerals in forest areas and therefore now there is an increased focus on increasing employment opportunities in the tribal areas. Shri Modi said that few years back there were 18 tribal research centres in the country, which have now increased to 27.

The Prime Minister said that the tribal community is the precious asset of the country. The tribals are industrious and the spirit of service is inherent in them. Shivraj ji has presented an example of this service by starting the scheme to supply ration directly to beneficiaries in tribal villages and launching sickle cell anaemia mission.

Tribal Pride Day is actually a campaign to transform tribal lives- Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that this event is a campaign to transform the lives of tribals. Modi ji has provided the free ration of Rs.9857 crore for the poor and tribal brothers and sisters of the state. He said that the Madhya Pradesh government will soon launch recruitment on government backlog posts.

More than 1 crore 53 lakh tribal brothers and sisters reside in Madhya Pradesh, which is 14 percent of the total tribal population of the whole of India. Now effective implementation of 'PESA Act' will be done for tribals; forest committees will be given the right to sell tendu leaves. Four people from every village will be finalised as rural engineer.

The Madhya Pradesh government has given impetus to many works in the direction of tribal welfare. Along with the Central Government, the Government of Madhya Pradesh has also taken major steps for the upliftment of the tribals so that the development of the community may gain momentum and their education, their rights on the forestlands, infrastructure development, health, nutrition, art, literature and culture could be protected and encouraged.

Important decisions for tribal welfare by Madhya Pradesh government

- **Pre-matric scholarships** of more than Rs.153 crore have been provided to 9 lakh 98 thousand students of the state and **post-matric scholarships** worth more than Rs.381 crore to 2 lakh 48 thousand students.
- Coaching facility was provided to 721 students under **Akanksha Yojana**, in which more than Rs.3 crore was spent. Through this scheme, 346 students of the state have got admission in prestigious courses like **IIT, medical, law**. This year 724 students are studying.
- About **34 thousand claims** have been validated so far by re-examination of families whose claims were earlier rejected under the Forest Rights Act.
- **Smart classes** worth more than Rs.21 crore have been sanctioned in 370 schools of 8 tribal-dominated districts of the state.
- **82 girls education complexes** have been sanctioned to promote holistic education of girl child belonging to Scheduled Tribes.
- **New medical colleges** have been sanctioned in the tribal dominated districts of Sheopur and Mandla in collaboration with the Government of India.
- **Chhindwara University** was renamed as **Raja Shankarshah University**.
- **Rs. 224 crore** is being paid every year in the accounts of more than 2 lakh 24 thousand women of special backward tribes Baiga, Bharia and Saharia under the **Aahar Anudan Yojana** or food grant scheme.

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VICTORY AT LAST
Farmers at Delhi's Singhu border rejoice after the PM's announcement on repeal of the farm laws

BANDEEP SINGH

FARMERS' AGITATION

NOW, THE WAR OVER MSP

By Anilesh S. Mahajan

It's back to square one, it seems. The Union cabinet, on November 24, approved the repeal of the three contentious central farm laws that provoked thousands of farmers into a seemingly interminable agitation—marked by a year-long dharna on the borders of the national capital—besides threatening the BJP's prospects in the upcoming Punjab and Uttar Pradesh assembly polls. The Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021, which the Union cabinet approved, will be tabled in the winter session of Parliament, starting on November 29. It will bring the curtain down on the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

The laws were opposed tooth and nail by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), the consortium of 32 unions representing farmers who feared the new laws would put them at the mercy of large corporates. They feared the potential outsized influence of big new private players on their land holdings and the prices their produce might command, besides losing the right, under these laws, to move courts in disputes.

High on the list of worries of the agitating farmers was the anticipated creeping death of the government's MSP (minimum support price) mechanism, which apart from being a promise of assured procurement of select crops is also, by extension, a fair price discovery mechanism. It's another matter that the bulk of said procurement happens in two crops—wheat and paddy.

Now that the repeal of the other three laws is imminent, the farmers sniff an opportunity to press their other demand to write the MSP into law. But even as they celebrate the promised

GROWTH RATE OF INDIAN ECONOMY

India has emerged as the fastest growing major economy in the world and is expected to be one of the top three economic powers in the world over the next 10-15 years, backed by its robust democracy and strong partnerships.

India's gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices stood at Rs. 51.23 lakh crore (US$ 694.93 billion) in the first quarter of FY22, as per the provisional estimates of gross domestic product for the first quarter of 2021-22.

India is the fourth-largest unicorn base in the world with over 21 unicorns collectively valued at US$ 73.2 billion, as per the Hurun Global Unicorn List. By 2025, India is expected to have ~100 unicorns by 2025 and will create ~1.1 million direct jobs according to the Nasscom-Zinnov report 'Indian Tech Start-up.

India needs to increase its rate of employment growth and create 90 million non-farm jobs between 2023 and 2030's, for productivity and economic growth according to McKinsey Global Institute. Net employment rate needs to grow by 1.5% per year from 2023 to 2030 to achieve 8-8.5% GDP growth between 2023 and 2030. According to data from the Department of Economic Affairs, as of August 27, 2021, foreign exchange reserves in India reached US$ 633.5 billion mark.

With an improvement in the economic scenario, there have been investments across various sectors of the economy. The private equity - venture capital (PE-VC) sector recorded investments worth US$ 10.7 billion across 137 deals in August 2021, registering a 5x YoY growth. Some of the important recent developments in Indian economy are as follows:

India's merchandise exports between April 2021 and August 2021 were estimated at US$ 164.10 billion (a 67.33% YoY increase). Merchandise imports between April 2021 and August 2021 were estimated at US$ 219.63 billion (an 80.89% YoY growth).

Lakshmi Narayanan Sundaram, Stock Market Expert

In August 2021, the Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) in India stood at 52.3.

The gross GST (Goods and Services Tax) revenue collection stood at Rs. 112,020 crore (US$ 15.21 billion) in August 2021.

According to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), FDI equity inflow in India stood at US$ 547.2 billion between April 2000 and June 2021.

India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for July 2021 stood at 131.4 against 122.6 for June 2021.

Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) – Combined inflation was 3.11 in August 2021 against 3.96 in July 2021.

Consumer Price Index (CPI) – Combined inflation was 5.30 in August 2021 against 5.59 in July 2021.Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) invested US$ 2.5 billion in India in August 2021.

SCALE OF PROCUREMENT

₹78,000 CRORE

India's food procurement budget for FY 2022. This is in addition to **Rs 3.44 lakh crore** food subsidies

433.44 LAKH MT

Total wheat procured in the country in rabi season of 2021, of which 132.08 lakh tonnes came from Punjab alone

202.78 LAKH MT

Punjab's contribution in the last kharif marketing season to national paddy buffer of 894.24 lakh tonnes

repeal and the retreat this represents for the government, the farmers seem unwilling to lower their guard or call off the agitation.

If the farmers persisted with the protests in the middle of a pandemic and despite attempts to discredit and intimidate them, it's because they see it as a question of survival.

The November 24 decision of the Union cabinet is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on November 19—the 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev—that the farm laws were being withdrawn. The government still hopes the move will prompt the unions, predominantly from Punjab, to end their 13-month-long agitation. But while some joyous unions want to continue with a symbolic protest till the Farm Laws Repeal Bill is enacted, others intend to continue with the protests till the government makes MSP a legal right, thereby disallowing trading below the benchmark price set by the government.

Legalising MSP, its critics say, will discourage crop diversification and region-appropriate farming

The unions have other demands too: withdrawal of the Electricity Amendment Bill, 2021; action against MoS (Home) Ajay Kumar Mishra over the death of farmers in the violence in UP's Lakhimpur Kheri in October; compensation for the families of 700 protesters who died during this agitation; and immunity from penal action for stubble-burning.

Rakesh Tikait, national spokesperson of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU), says MSP should not only be made a legal right but its calculation should include the cost of land. Devinder Sharma, a Chandigarh-based agriculture economist, seconds the idea, saying: "This is the real reform that Indian agriculture needs."

The demand is often linked to the economic sustenance of farmers. In Punjab, for instance, small and marginal farmers are invariably burdened with debt. A 2018 report of the NITI Aayog says the average debt burden on rural households in the state is about Rs 2.12 lakh, among the highest in the country.

Critics, however, argue that making MSP a legal right may still leave a sizeable section of farmers out. Small and marginal farmers, who have little surplus but play a significant role in ensuring household food security, will continue to sell their produce to the bigger farmers or rely on entitlements under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. Monetary support from the government for this lot will likely entail increasing the Rs 6,000 per year dole provided under the scheme.

The RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) favours guaranteed MSP. "Multiple tools are available in the market to ensure that farmers get higher remuneration," says Ashwani Mahajan, national co-convenor of RSS affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM). "One of them is to allow farmers to trade warehouse receipts, instead of FCI (Food Corporation of India) or any central agency physically procuring the grains. This will incentivise private investment in warehouses. The government must ensure that MSP becomes the floor value of the product."

Punjab has about 2.7 per cent of the country's cultivable land. The state accounts for about 19 per cent of the total wheat and 12 per cent of the paddy produced in the country. If MSP is made a legal right, FCI may diversify procurement and reduce dependency on Punjab. This is probably why the demand for guaranteed MSP doesn't have many takers in the state.

There are political considerations in the mix as well. Some observers argue that the farmer leaders see the agitation as a way of promoting their political careers. Tikait, for example, has contested elections. In Punjab, the unions can influence votes, and many of them are negotiating with parties, such as the Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Amarinder Singh's Punjab Lok Congress, to get tickets for their candidates. Farmer leader Gurnam Singh Chaduni has said he will field his own candidates in the election. But with the farm laws likely to be repealed, the agitation credentials of these leaders may lose salience in the upcoming elections.

Meanwhile, at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference beginning in Geneva on November 30, India and 29 other developing countries will be negotiating with the developed economies to retain the right to subsidise agriculture. As per the findings of the Shanta Kumar-led committee on the restructuring of FCI, released in 2015, government procurement benefits only about 6 per cent of the country's farmers. The addition of millets, pulses and some other commodities to the procurement list has grown that footprint a bit.

Those against legalising MSP argue that the mechanism will disincentivise crop diversification and dissuade farmers from growing crops appropriate for their region. Punjab, for instance, continues to grow water-guzzling paddy despite alarming levels of depletion of groundwater. Is guaranteed MSP, then, really the answer to poor farmers' woes and the problems ailing the farm sector? The jury is still out. ■

DR. SUDIPTO PAKRASI
Chairman - Division of Ophthalmology,
Medanta - The Medicity, Gurgaon, New Delhi.

The New Extended Vision lens implant for cataract surgery: Designed to match the new age lifestyle

CONQUERING CATARACT
Supported by Alcon

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever", is a famous line by the poet Keats. But what if our ability to visually perceive, that which brings us joy, starts waning with age? Cataract is a condition that will affect many of us sooner or later and which when not addressed can significantly impact daily activities. These small inconveniences in daily life cumulatively contribute to decline in the overall quality of life.

Take the instance of **Mrs. Anu Lal,** wife of the famous Indian cricketer, Mr. Madan Lal who found that apart from daily activities, her social life was also being affected by visual disturbances. Even something as mundane as reading or applying makeup became a cumbersome task. In low-light conditions, it was hard to see clearly.

Upon consultation with ophthalmologist, **Dr. Sudipto Pakrasi,** Mrs Anu Lal was informed that she would need to undergo cataract surgery. Noting the inconveniences faced by Mrs Lal while wearing spectacles, and her other visual needs, Dr. Pakrasi suggested an option (Extended Vision Lens) that would enable her to be largely spectacle-independent and suit her lifestyle visual needs.

Dr. Pakrasi, one of the early adopters of this new lens technology, shares insights on cataract care today.

How Advanced is Cataract Surgery Today?

Today's cataract surgery technology has come a long way. Laser technology precision for the procedure, quicker surgeries and recoveries, and of-course, presbyopia-correcting lens implants are the hallmarks of the latest cataract surgery technology available today.

From mere vision restoration, today modern cataract surgery aims for vision enhancement to bestow youthful vision.

Why is it Important to map patient's visual needs while making the choice of lens implant?

In recent times, globe-trotting senior citizens with new active lifestyles and using the latest high-tech gadgets such as smartphones, tablets and laptops are a common sight. Consequently, quality near and intermediate vision has become paramount. Hence a detailed understanding of visual needs is important in recommending a correct lens implant which can aid patients to minimal or no dependency on glasses.

The popular lens options today are the Trifocal or Extended vision lens (a recent introduction).

How does the Extended Vision Lens support a New Age and New Lifestyle?

Extended Vision Lens is a first-of-its-kind Presbyopia-correcting Lens with **wave front shaping technology** which **stretches and shifts** the light without splitting it (unlike conventional technologies). This unique technology provides improved quality for a continuous range of vision – distance, intermediate and functional near vision with minimal or no dependency on glasses, which is what today's patients and their new lifestyles demand.

Thousands of patients around the globe, have opted for this new lens implant and are experiencing improved quality of life just like Mrs Anu Lal, who described with smiling eyes to Dr Pakrasi, *"Doc, I can now read and see at all distances, I don't have to carry my glasses around. After seven years, I can do my eye makeup without using magnifying glass.–, absolutely nothing bothers me anymore. A big thanks to you and the wonders of this new lens technology"*.

For more details on the Extended Vision lens, talk to your eye Surgeon. Also visit

www.extendyourvision.co.in

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are of Dr. Sudipto Pakrasi from Medanta - The Medicity Hospital and are meant for general information and awareness purposes only. Please consult your physician for medical advice.

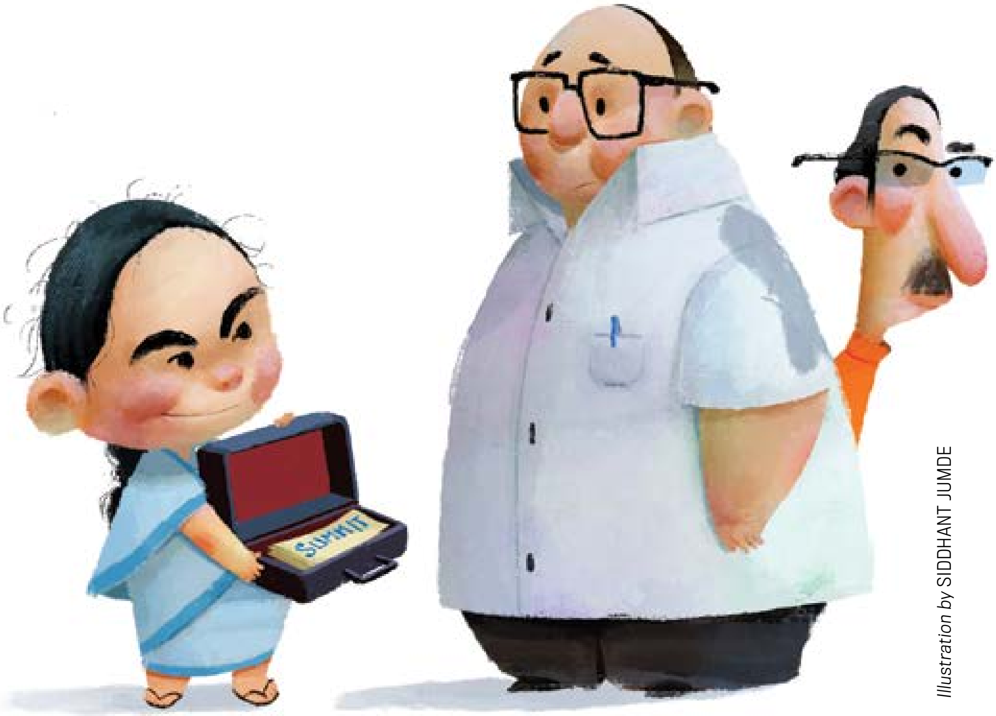

Illustration by SIDDHANT JUMDE

GLASSHOUSE

BUSINESS WITH PRESSURE

West Bengal chief minister **Mamata Banerjee** will be doing a three-day tour of Mumbai in December. The visit is strictly business—she wants corporate India to attend the Bengal Global Business Summit she's hosting next April. The Trinamool Congress grapevine says she's also seeking investors for another pet project, a united opposition front minus the Congress. Mamata is meeting key opposition stakeholders, including NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray. Pawar and Mamata broke away from the Congress a year apart in the late 1990s to float their own regional parties. Pawar, however, still wants the Congress in the alliance. *Khela hobe*?

New Khan on the Block

Maharashtra state Congress working president **Naseem Khan** has in recent months berated Pakistan for the Pulwama terror attack and spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar for advocating peace with our neighbour. His latest move: mandatory singing of the national anthem at party meetings. No prizes for guessing who the party's Nationalist No. 1 is.

ROAD RUNNER

Awanish Kumar Awasthi is possibly India's most overworked bureaucrat. The Uttar Pradesh additional chief secretary (home) and UP Expressways Industrial Development Authority CEO is also supervising the construction of four expressways (it's an election year, after all). Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the 340km-long Purvanchal Expressway. Gorakhpur, Bundelkhand and the Meerut-Prayagraj expressways are next. Looks like he'll only be able to rest after the election in March.

MNEESH AGNIHOTRI

—Sandeep Unnithan with Romita Datta, Kiran D. Tare, Ashish Misra, Rohit Parihar and Amitabh Srivastava

PTI

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

After three years as chief minister, **Ashok Gehlot** is now turning on the charm offensive. A recent cabinet expansion saw him fill nine vacant cabinet berths. Those left out aren't complaining—six MLAs have been made the CM's advisors. Twenty-four MLAs, it is believed, will soon be inducted as parliamentary secretaries and chairpersons of boards and corporations with ministerial perks. Roughly half his 123 MLAs will soon enjoy ministerial perks. That's hospitality, Gehlot style.

GET UP, STAND UP

Bihar chief minister **Nitish Kumar** believes his babus aren't deferential enough to lawmakers. A recent circular issued by the general administration department, which reports to him, directs bureaucrats to prioritise appointments with public representatives and stand while receiving them at their offices. The circular also tells them how to treat requests they cannot entertain: "Explain it to them politely...."

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3 और 4 दिसंबर 2021 | नई दिल्ली

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READY MISSION
PM Modi with Yogi Adityanath after inaugurating the water projects in Mahoba, Nov. 19

UTTAR PRADESH ELECTION

THE BATTLE FOR BUNDELKHAND

By Ashish Misra

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a special relationship with Mahoba in Bundelkhand. Before the 2017 Uttar Pradesh assembly election, he launched the BJP's 'Mission Bundelkhand' from here with a 'parivartan rally' in October 2016. This was the first time a prime minister was visiting Mahoba, an extremely backward district in the region. The strategy apparently worked and in 2017 the BJP swept all 19 seats in Bundelkhand.

Keeping this in mind, Prime Minister Modi, along with Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, once again launched Mission Bundelkhand from the Police Line Grounds in Mahoba on November 19. The prime minister also inaugurated four water projects, completed at a cost of Rs 3,240 crore. With this, drinking water could soon be available to the 430,000 people of Mahoba, Hamirpur, Banda and Lalitpur districts. Modi also targeted the previous governments of opposition parties, saying they "played the game of commissions in the excavation of dams and drains" while the people thirsted for water.

From Mahoba, the prime minister reached Jhansi, the land of Rani Laxmibai, where he laid the foundation stone of a Rs 400 crore plant for missile company Bharat Dynamics Ltd. In a speech here, PM Modi remembered local heroines Laxmibai, Avanti Bai and Uda Devi, women venerated for their role in India's freedom struggle. It was also no doubt intended as a feel-good acknowledgement of the electorally significant Thakur, Lodh and Passi castes these women came from.

This being election season, opposition parties are also alive to the importance of the state's Bundelkhand region. Forty-eight hours earlier, Congress general secretary and UP in-charge Priyanka Gandhi was in Chitrakoot district, the *dharmanagari* of Bundelkhand. She reached Bharat Ghat on the Mandakini river by boat to launch the party's 'Adhee Aabadi Abhiyan', a campaign to mobilise the "70 million women of UP" and to take part in a related 'Shakti Samvad' programme, where much is made of the Congress's new catchline, '*Main ladki hoon, main lad sakti hoon* (I am a girl, I can fight)'.

With less than two months to go before the election code of conduct kicks in, the sudden frenzy of political activity in Bundelkhand is a measure of its political importance. Babulal Tiwari, former principal of Bundelkhand Degree College, says, "Bundelkhand is a very backward region, compared to other parts of UP. It's drought-prone and most farmers have small holdings. The percentage of Dalits and Backwards in the population is also very high (see *The Caste Matrix*). This is the reason political parties stress on scoring brownie points in Bundelkhand, for it sends a positive message to the farmers, Dalits and backward classes in other areas of the state too. It happened in 2017, and might again in 2022."

Two years after forming the government, in February 2019, Yogi Adityanath set up the Bundelkhand Development Board (BDB) to accelerate development in the region. Alongside the 10-member board, 14 other committees were constituted to

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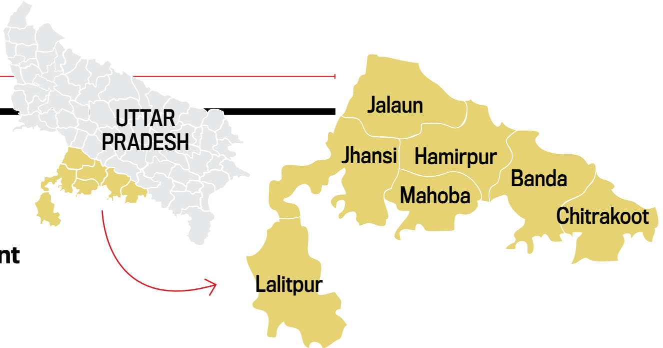
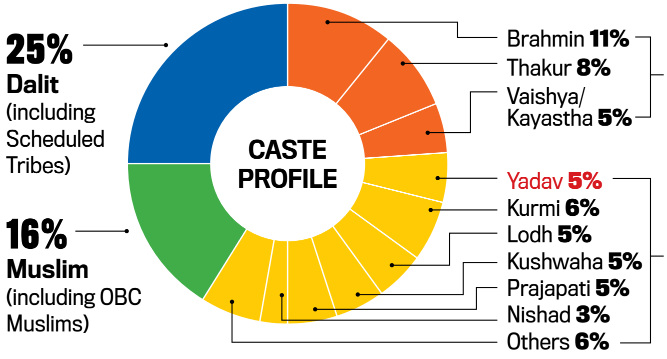
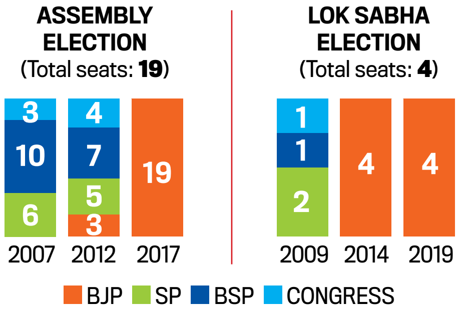
THE CASTE MATRIX

Bundelkhand has a high concentration of Dalits and OBCs and its chronic backwardness makes development promises a feature of election campaigns







Graphic by TANMOY CHAKRABORTY

suggest solutions to Bundelkhand's problems. BDB member Pawanputra Badal says, "Drinking and irrigation projects worth over Rs 20,000 crore are under way to rid Bundelkhand of its water problems." Development schemes worth another Rs 30,000 crore are also in the works, including the 296-km Bundelkhand Expressway connecting the region directly to the Agra-Lucknow Expressway. Started in February 2020, the Rs 15,000 crore expressway is almost 80 per cent complete. "The image of the region has changed. Backward Bundelkhand is now on the path of development," says Badal.

In order to strengthen social equations, the BJP made senior leader Swatantra Dev Singh, who made his political debut from Jalaun district, state president in July 2019. Babulal Tiwari says, "Swatantra Dev is a Kurmi, but he has a good hold over the other castes of Bundelkhand too." To make inroads among the Dalits, five-time MP from Jalaun-Garautha, Bhanu Pratap Verma, was made minister in the Union cabinet expansion in July. Former Dalit MP from Barabanki and state general secretary Priyanka Singh Rawat is now in charge of the Kanpur-Bundelkhand region, the first time a Dalit woman has held the post. This should go down well with both constituencies.

Recognising how crucial the region was, Yogi Adityanath formed the Bundelkhand Development Board in February 2019

The Bundelkhand area has always been a big challenge for the main opposition, the Samajwadi Party (SP). The SP's best performance was the six seats it won here in the 2007 assembly election. SP president Akhilesh Yadav took out a 'Vijay yatra' in Hamirpur on October 13. The SP strategy here seems to be to poach leaders from other parties to shore up its ranks. Senior Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader and ex-MLA Arimardan Singh, Congress leader and former MLA Gayadin Anuragi, ex-MLA from Jalaun Vinod Chaturvedi and Mahoba veteran and Congress leader Manoj Tiwari are a few who have joined the SP ranks.

The SP Backward Classes Cell chief Rajpal Kashyap also took out a 'Nyay yatra' from Jhansi on October 22, covering the districts of Mahoba, Hamirpur and Lalitpur by the end of the month. "There are problems related to water, land and the forests in Bundelkhand, and the Dalits, backward classes and farmers are the most affected by it. We have been running awareness campaigns about the harmful policies of the Yogi government and the SP's future plans for the region," says Kashyap.

With a large Dalit population, the Bundelkhand area was a BSP stronghold till the 2012 assembly poll. Tiwari says, "The BSP was very strong here, but leaders like Nazimuddin Siddiqui, Babu Singh Kushwaha and Daddu Prasad, who were big names in Bundelkhand, have left the party. It led to the marginalisation of the party." BSP supremo Mayawati has put four senior leaders—Ashok Gautam, Lalaram Ahirwar, Brijesh Jatav and Rambabu Chirgaiya—on the job to revive the party with Jhansi's own Ravikant Maurya leading the charge. To woo the Brahmins, party general secretary Satish C. Mishra organised 'Prabuddha Varg Goshthis' in Banda and Chitrakoot districts.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi has been raising the issues of farmers in Bundelkhand. Jhansi resident and farmer leader Shiv Narayan Singh Parihar, who heads the party's Kisan Morcha, has been a thorn in the flesh of the Yogi government, relentlessly flagging issues of concern for farmers. Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel has also been visiting Bundelkhand, holding meetings, and appealing to his Kurmi caste cohorts to vote Congress in 2022. As even the prime minister knows, Bundelkhand may be backward, but the road to power in Uttar Pradesh passes through here. ■

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CRYPTOCURRENCIES

CRYPTO GETS THE JITTERS

By M.G. Arun

Illustration by **NILANJAN DAS**

The terse introduction to the proposed Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency (CRDC) Bill, 2021, made public on November 23, has left India's crypto-investors in a state of panic. While it was widely expected in circles familiar with India's newfound love for crypto (see our previous cover story, titled *Cryptomania*) that the Centre would possibly bring in new norms to regulate cryptocurrencies, a blanket ban on all private crypto was unexpected. The bill is likely to be tabled in the forthcoming session of Parliament, which gets under way on November 29.

The introduction to the bill talks of 'seeking to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India' with 'certain exemptions to promote the underlying technology'. It is not yet clear whether the government is looking to ban crypto trading entirely, or if the ban will only apply to its use as currency. The bill also aims to create a framework for an 'official digital currency', though experts say this is still some way off.

Former finance secretary Subhash Chandra Garg, an ardent votary of well-regulated cryptos as an asset class, said he would only seriously consider the Centre's move after the bill was made public for consultation. "The introductory language talks about cryptocurrencies essentially as currency," he says. "Cryptos are much bigger assets than currencies—today, they are trading platforms and create products and services." He added that it would be a big loss for India if the bill restricts cryptos to simply currencies and implements a blanket ban.

After the initial shock, many in the industry have come round to thinking that the proposed ban will not apply to cryptos as an asset class, but there will be regulations. "Our discussions [with various stakeholders, including the government] over the past few weeks indicate there is broad agreement on ensuring that customers are protected, that the stability of the financial system is reinforced and that India is able to take advantage of the crypto technology revolution," says Ashish Singhal, founder and CEO of crypto exchange CoinSwitch Kuber and co-chair of the Blockchain and Crypto Assets Council (BACC). "We are hopeful the government will involve industry stakeholders while [finalising] the bill," he adds. He estimates there are 15-20 million crypto investors in India, with about $6 billion (Rs 44,400 crore) invested in various cryptocurrencies.

On November 23, there was panic selling on Indian crypto exchanges. One of the worst hit was WazirX, which 'crashed' under heavy selling pressure, according to one investor. Saksham Jain, 25, says the panic was mostly among investors looking for short-term gains. Jain says he has invested Rs 10,000 in

TOGETHER WE FALL

The terse introduction of the Centre's proposed CRDC Bill caused prices on Indian crypto exchanges to crash on November 23-24

CRYPTOCURRENCY	PRICE	CHANGE (24H)	CHANGE (%)	MARKET CAP
Bitcoin	₹41,73,695	▼₹3,91,504	▼8.58%	₹79.1 lakh cr
Ethereum	₹3,16,698	▼₹20,193	▼5.99%	₹36.6 lakh cr
Tether	₹73.93	▼₹7.78	▼9.53%	₹5.4 lakh cr
Cardano	₹124.28	▼₹20.12	▼13.94%	₹4.4 lakh cr
Ripple	₹76.58	▼₹8.10	▼9.45%	₹3.6 lakh cr
Polkadot	₹2,908.1	▼₹279.90	▼8.78%	₹2.9 lakh cr
USD Coin	₹73.92	▼₹7.79	▼9.55%	₹2.7 lakh cr
Dogecoin	₹16.24	▼₹1.99	▼10.96%	₹2.2 lakh cr

Data from November 24, 5.35 PM; Source: CoinSwitch Kuber

ON NOV. 23, THERE WAS PANIC SELLING ON INDIAN CRYPTO EXCHANGES, WITH THE PRICE OF ALL MAJOR CRYPTO TOKENS CRASHING

cryptos every month since March, and is holding on to his portfolio. “I believe the Centre will still allow cryptos as an investment [class]. And even if there is a ban, people can operate from foreign exchanges.” He has already shifted 70 per cent of his investments from WazirX to Binance, an overseas platform that acquired WazirX in 2019.

In an effort to soothe frayed investor nerves, WazirX put out a clarificatory statement: ‘We’d like to reiterate that WazirX has an open order book and doesn’t determine or control the price of any crypto on the exchange.... There will always be [price differences] from exchange to exchange, country to country, etc. depending on the demand and supply.... We also request all our users [not to] panic sell.’ CoinSwitch’s Singhal had similar words of reassurance, urging investors not to rush to conclusions. At 5.35 pm, on November 24, the price of Bitcoin was down 8.6 per cent over the previous 24 hours to Rs 41.73 lakh, Ethereum had slumped 5.9 per cent to Rs 3.16 lakh, and Cardano was down 13.9 per cent to Rs 124.28 (*see chart:* Together We Fall), as per CoinSwitch.

It is not yet clear whether India will impose a blanket ban on all cryptocurrency transactions. “In my understanding, the Centre is not in a hurry,” says Garg. “It wants to be seen as doing something on this matter. A similar move to introduce a cryptocurrency bill was promised in last year’s winter session, but did not emerge.”

On November 13, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting that flagged the issue of “misleading, over-promising and non-transparent” advertising in cryptocurrencies. Officials in the know say the PM wanted forward-looking legislation. The RBI (Reserve Bank of India), however, has “serious concerns” about cryptos. Earlier, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das had said cryptocurrencies posed a threat to the “macroeconomic and financial stability” of India. In 2018, the RBI had imposed a ban on crypto trading, which was overturned by the Supreme Court in March 2020. On November 15, the Standing Committee on Finance, chaired by BJP MP Jayant Sinha, met representatives of crypto exchanges and the BACC, among others, and recommended that cryptocurrencies be regulated, not banned.

Experts say the central bank is concerned it might be accused of sleeping at the wheel if there is a big crisis in this sector, such as a major fraud or market crash. There are also concerns that individuals might take loans to buy cryptos, which could potentially create more NPAs (non-performing assets, or bad loans). It’s not clear, though, how the government intends to impose a ban on an online—and therefore somewhat borderless—activity, and how it regulates and taxes such trades. For now, all eyes are on the winter session of Parliament. ■

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BEFORE THE CRASH
Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma at the listing of his firm on the BSE on November 18

AFP

PAYTM IPO

WHAT THE PAYTM CRASH FORETELLS

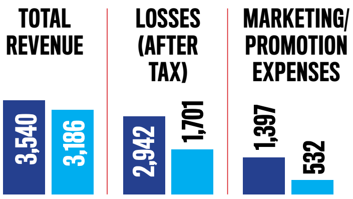
By M.G. Arun

It had been billed as India's biggest IPO (initial public offering), but when digital payments firm Paytm's Rs 18,300 crore share offer closed on November 10, the results were notably underwhelming. Though the IPO was oversubscribed, demand for Paytm's shares was only 1.9 times the supply—in contrast, other recent IPOs, such as of fashion retailer Nykaa (oversubscribed 82 times), food delivery aggregator Zomato (38 times) and insurance products aggregator Policybazaar (17 times) saw much greater investor interest.

Worse was in store for the Vijay Shekhar Sharma-promoted firm when Paytm shares were listed on the exchanges. On November 18, the share price of One97 Communications (Paytm's parent company) sank 27 per cent. The stock had been listed at Rs 1,950—a discount of 9.3 per cent on its offer price of Rs 2,150—and closed at Rs 1,564, leading to a reported loss for investors of about Rs 5,000 crore. The shares continued their fall on Monday, November 22, plunging to Rs 1,360.30. The company's market cap dropped to Rs 88,184.67 crore, as against market expectations of around Rs 1.4 lakh crore at the time of listing. Though the share price rose 9 per cent in intra-day trading on November 23 to reach Rs 1,480, market watchers weren't confident that this marked a turnaround.

Analysts offer a host of reasons for the crash—for one, the markets were already tepid, with the BSE Sensex falling 372 points on November 18 and 1,170 points on November 22, on weak global cues and concerns about high inflation and a possible market correction. There are worries about Paytm's growth prospects, about the fact that it does not have a lending licence, the strong competition it faces—and its inflated valuation. Analysts are now worried that Paytm's lacklustre debut might have a knock-on effect on the listings of other tech-assisted start-ups.

PAYTM'S PAYOFFS



■ FY2020 ■ FY2021 (Rs crore)

Source: Company reports

INVESTOR CONCERNS

- Inflated valuations
- Lack of focus on a core business
- Stiff market competition
- Elusive profitability

The lukewarm market has had an effect on other e-commerce firms as well—on November 22, the share price of FSN E-Commerce Ventures, Nykaa's parent firm, fell marginally to Rs 2,098, Zomato's fell 4.4 per cent to Rs 147.85 and Policybazaar's by 8.43 per cent to Rs 1,218.70. While November 22 was an exceptional day, with the market dropping overall, experts say the slump in tech shares is likely to continue. "With the Paytm issue failing to make a mark, people have started questioning tech platform-based companies," says Arun Kejriwal, founder, Kejriwal Research & Investment Services. "You will see this happen in the coming days and to future offerings that hit the market."

This highlights some of the larger issues with tech start-ups that experts have been flagging. On the bourses, start-ups face much greater scrutiny and are valued on the basis of their dominance of their respective sectors, their access to capital and their ability to sustain losses to grow their market shares. Savvy investors also want to gauge when these firms might break even or become profitable. On November 22, brokerage firm Macquarie, which had earlier questioned Paytm's valuation, said it would maintain its target price of Rs 1,200 for the firm's shares and an 'underperform' rating.

In a bid to rein in the slide in its share price, Paytm, in a note to the exchanges on November 22, said its gross merchandise value grew 131 per cent on a y-o-y (year-on-year) basis in October, with 63 million monthly transacting users, a y-o-y increase of 35 per cent. It said a million additional merchant devices had been deployed over the past 12 months and that its lending business had disbursed 1.3 million loans. However, Macquarie said these numbers would not impact its profit and loss estimates for Paytm, pointing out that Paytm's gross merchandise value growth is dominated by UPI payments, where Paytm earns zero merchant discount rates (rates charged to merchants for payment processing). The bottom line is that Paytm needs stronger numbers to convince investors that buying its shares is a good investment. ■

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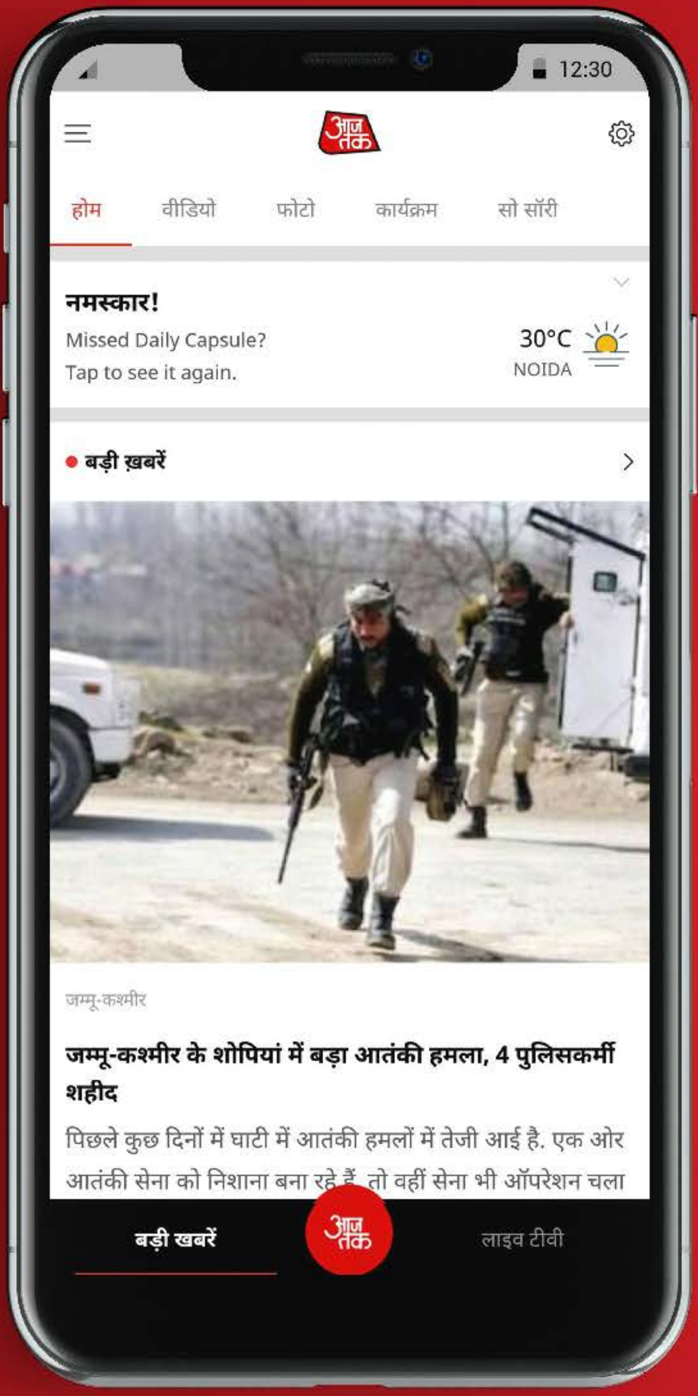

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TIGER COUNT

FADING ROAR?

By Rahul Noronha

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UNPROTECTED
Heera, a male tiger, resting in MP's Panna reserve (photographed in May 2021). Heera was recently killed by poachers

A slew of tiger deaths in Madhya Pradesh has set off alarm bells in the state's wildlife establishment. At 39 deaths so far in 2021, with a month still to go before the year closes, the spike in MP's tiger mortality rate (up from 32 in 2020) has authorities fretting over potential consequences.

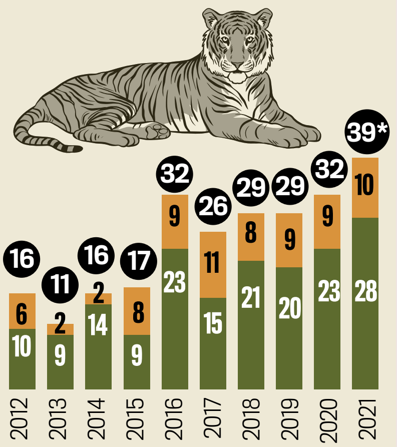
At a headline level, the state is at risk of losing its prestigious 'tiger state' tag, which it had wrested from Karnataka in 2019. As per the latest quadrennial wildlife census (2019), MP's tiger population was 526, just two more than Karnataka's. However, Karnataka has reported 15 tiger deaths so far in 2021 whereas MP's count of 39 deaths is 34.5 per cent of the total 113 deaths recorded in India this year. Of these, 28 have been attributed to natural causes (i.e. infighting) and 10 to poaching. The report for the one remaining death is awaited.

On November 22, Madhya Pradesh High Court Chief Justice Ravi Malimath, while hearing a PIL by wildlife activist Ajay Dubey, issued notices to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the state government to explain the exceptionally high number of tiger deaths. Meanwhile, the data collection under Phase I of the All India Tiger Estimation exercise began in MP on November 17. The results of the census are to be announced in 2023.

Why are so many tigers dying in MP? "Tigers venture out of forest reserves to carve out territory. Many are killed outside, in revenue areas, where forest department staff is not present to protect them," says Rajneesh Singh, deputy conservator of forests (wildlife), Madhya Pradesh. In its defence, the state forest department says none of the cases of poaching are linked to syndicates or organised gangs. The tiger deaths, often by electrocution, are mainly accidental, they claim. "In almost all the cases of electrocution of tigers, the intended quarry was not the tiger but herbivores poached for meat," says an official in the state tiger strike force, a dedicated anti-poaching unit.

That the protection measures are weak, though, is evident from the fact that in November, even a radio-collared tigress (collared for close monitoring) was poached in eastern MP's Singrauli district. "The continuous cases of tiger deaths and the failure of the forest department to secure prosecution in previous poaching cases prompted me to file a PIL," says Dubey.

TIGER MORTALITY IN MADHYA PRADESH



*Cause of death in one case yet to be ascertained

● Natural Deaths ● Unnatural Deaths ● Total

Source: Forest Department Madhya Pradesh

Graphic by ASIT ROY

Despite the surge in tiger deaths, many foresters in Madhya Pradesh are confident of retaining the 'tiger state' tag and are, in fact, optimistic that the state will be able to widen the gap between MP and Karnataka when the new census findings are announced in 2023. "As per the 2019 census, there were about 500 tigers in Madhya Pradesh, of which 350 were female. Studies suggest that of these, with a three-month gestation period and an average litter size of two, nearly 100 tigresses would be delivering 200 cubs every year. There is nothing to worry about," says Singh. "Also, as per the previous census report, MP had a tiger-bearing area of around 15,200 sq. km against Karnataka's 15,800 sq. km. But MP had the potential to expand its tiger-bearing area to about 72,000 sq. km, the report found, whereas Karnataka could possibly expand to 36,000 sq. km."

MP's tourism industry is heavily dependent on forests and wildlife. Home to some of the most renowned parks, like Panna, Kanha and Bandhavgarh, the state's wildlife policies are being lately formulated keeping tourism in mind—at the risk of drawing the ire of conservationists. Post-Covid, the state has seen a rush of tourists opting for safaris.

After the second wave, faced with a resource crunch, the MP government locked horns with the NTCA, wanting to keep tiger reserves open for tourism even after the latter advised against it. "We are keen to inform guests about everything the forest offers, not just tigers. But whether one likes it or not, the tiger is the biggest draw," says Aly Rashid, of Jehan Numa Wilderness, a hospitality group with properties at the Satpura Tiger Reserve. ■

Q&A

Creating an Ecosystem that facilitates improvements in the Healthcare Sector

With the COVID19 pandemic exerting enormous pressure on the healthcare infrastructure, the sector finds itself under the compulsion to step up. In this interview Dr. G.V. Sampath, Chairman, Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore addresses how India can make optimum use of its existing resources to meet the demands of the changing times.

Q What can be done to improve healthcare infrastructure, research and manpower in India?

Private sector in health care delivery needs to be encouraged. Additionally, it is important for Government agencies to take cognizance of the lacunae in the state run facilities, and remove the hurdles that they put in the way of private agencies setting up good facilities. Statutory licenses and other approvals must be relaxed so that they don't act as deterrents.

Centralising the database of patients across the country, especially in the state run and central institutions, would provide comprehensive research material. Sharing this data with any individual or institution desirous of doing meaningful research would put India on the medical research map of the world. Further, involving non-governmental experts in the apex research bodies that regulate research in the country would open this avenue up to a much wider and open thinking. Currently, getting funding for research in private institutions is such an uphill task that private institutions have to rely on self-funding to do research.

Increasing medical, nursing and other paramedical training opportunities is of supreme importance, a strict control on the quality of training and assessment of the candidates before they are licensed to practice, would be paramount. Currently, there are one too many private medical and nursing schools and colleges that have no perspective on quality. This clearly undermines the quality of health care despite filling the gap in the numbers.

Q How has technology changed healthcare?

Yes, technology has drastically improved diagnostic capabilities, documentation, treatment modalities etc. However, the equipment industry has stepped in to exploit this avenue. Instead of medical needs driving technology, the reverse is happening, where equipment manufacturers and suppliers are driving new treatment protocols and policies in the health care sector. One is sometimes left wondering whether technology is skewing the ethical values that should drive the medical profession.

Q What has Covid taught the healthcare sector?

The selfless collaborative work of the healthcare workers stood out amidst the pandemic. The pharmaceutical industry also rose to the occasion by developing an indigenous vaccine. The government played its part in implementing the vaccination program very effectively.

The COVID pandemic also underlined the importance of Telemedicine consultations and its efficacy in the management of diseases.

Q Speciality at Naruvi and how it offers the best health infra in South India.

Naruvi Hospitals is built to international standards, and has the best in all specialties, with end to end treatment capabilities. From 100% clean laundry, top-of-the-line sterilisation equipment, zone specific air-conditioning conforming to ASHRAE standards, modular OTs with laminar airflow imported from Germany, Naruvi Hospitals has addressed infection control with the highest levels of diligence.

DR. G.V.SAMPATH
Chairman
Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore

It offers state-of-the-art OTs with electronic integration with the EMR, the highest order of Radiological equipment from GE, fully automated laboratories with the latest equipment, subscribing to quality programs of international standards, the latest cardiac catheterisation suites and a first of its kind ROBOTIC HYBRID OT, more than 120 critical care beds, with 60 plus ventilators, monitors, infusion and syringe pumps, all integrated to the EMR. Additionally, the ethical and moral standards maintained by the medical personnel, all trained out of the best institutions in the country, makes for honest, transparent and truly evidence based medical care, in the best interests of the patient.

TELANGANA

A NEW CHAPTER IN THE KCR PLAYBOOK

By Amarnath K. Menon

HIGHLIGHTING ISSUES KCR holds a press conference, November 8

ANI

On November 18, Telangana chief minister and Telangana Rashtra Samithi president K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) sat on a dharna and gave the Union government two days, until the afternoon of November 20, to procure at least 90 per cent of the paddy produced in the state, like in Punjab, and fix a Minimum Support Price (MSP). But with the Centre ignoring his demand and announcing repeal of the farm laws on November 19, KCR shifted camp to Delhi to pursue his state's demand and join hands with the farmers continuing their protests till the farm laws are repealed in Parliament.

"Along with the repeal of the three farm laws," KCR said, "the Centre should [also] enact an MSP law in the forthcoming session of Parliament." KCR's other demands include withdrawal of the Electricity Amendment Bill, another piece of legislation that he proclaims as anti-farmer. To give his pro-farmer, anti-Centre rant a rhetorical flourish, he says the Centre must give 'Aatmanirbhar Kisan' priority over 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

Before taking off for Delhi, KCR announced his state will grant Rs 3 lakh each to the families of those who died in the 13-month-long farmers' agitation in the country. Telangana ministers will be deputed to hand over the ex gratia payment of Rs 22.5 crore to the bereaved families of the deceased farmers. KCR wants the Centre to pay a grant of Rs 25 lakh each to the families of farmers who died during the agitation.

What explains KCR's renewed interest in farmers' issues? Analysts see it as a play to mount a federal front of regional parties against the BJP on common issues, and the more immediate need to overcome the loss of face in the November 2 Huzurabad assembly byelection, in which the TRS lost to the BJP. What made the defeat particularly humiliating was the fact that the man the BJP had fielded and who won—five-term MLA Eatala Rajender—was the finance minister in KCR's cabinet. Not only did KCR sack him from his ministry but also forced him to resign from the TRS and the legislative assembly, precipitating the need for the bypoll. G. Srinivas Yadav, the TRS youth leader fielded against Rajender, proved no match for the veteran.

₹22.5 cr

Total ex gratia promised by KCR for families of farmers who died during the agitation against central farm laws

₹25 lakh

Compensation KCR wants the Centre to pay to the kin of each deceased farmer

Shaken by the Huzurabad debacle, KCR is wary of the TRS losing further ground. Enter paddy politics, which the chief minister finds useful in redeeming his fortunes. Last year, KCR had announced a state procurement plan for paddy before the Food Corporation of India stepped in. Changing tack this year, he wants the Union government to take on the responsibility, even as he claims to have opened 6,000 purchase centres for the kharif paddy produced in the state. Upset over the delay in procurement and the alleged apathy of rice millers, farmers took to the streets on November 22, protesting over the glitches in procurement. Some of them claimed to have been waiting at purchase centres for over 20 days.

"The real issue is the vicious propaganda unleashed by the chief minister and his government," says Union tourism and culture minister G. Kishan Reddy, who also hails from Telangana. The Centre has not placed any conditionalities on paddy procurement, says Reddy, and will reimburse the cost to the state as per their mutual agreement.

However, KCR remains undeterred in his quest to become the messiah of the farming community as part of his strategy to rally regional parties. "Trying to identify with farmers to bring agriculture and rural development to the top of the national political agenda is a new dimension," says Prof. E. Venkatesu, who teaches political science at the University of Hyderabad. "It is possible to use it as a stepping stone for his entry into national politics." Whether or not it works, KCR is determined to give it a go. ■

147%
increase in Education budget between 2014-15 and 2021-22

99.9%
pass percentage in grade 12 in Delhi Government Schools in 2020-21 (outperforming private schools for the sixth consecutive year)

87%
increase in number of classrooms between 2015 and 2020

91%
teachers report feeling renewed motivation and enthusiasm

95%
teachers believe that quality of education has improved

95.5%
parents believe that Delhi Schools have become better

DELHI: A CASE OF MUCH NEEDED REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION

> "High quality education is not charity, it is a human right for any child born anywhere in India. And therefore, providing high quality education to all is the primary duty of any elected government"
>
> -Arvind Kejriwal
> Chief Minister of Delhi

Image: Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal with students

In a country where politics is plagued with empty promises, and divided along the lines of religion, caste, and creed, the city state of Delhi has witnessed education as a core issue in its policy agenda. In the last six years, this has resulted in significant reforms and progress in Delhi's public education system.

The impact of Delhi's education reforms is probably understated when described through numbers and figures. The improvements in learning levels and pass percentages across year groups is highly commendable. However, Delhi's greatest success lies in the fact that it has managed to energise the system in a manner most governments never considered possible. Parents, teachers, and students are now proud to be associated with Delhi's government schools.

The system is moving forward in mission mode after 7 years of reform- and stakeholders across different levels are filled with motivation and positivity toward the future of government schools.

Delhi's Education reforms have been built on two ideals. First, that every child, no matter their socioeconomic background, must have access to high quality education. Second, that the primary purpose of education is not simply to produce good employees; rather, to shape conscious and motivated citizens with a powerful will to work towards the betterment of society. This has led to a unique focus on providing a holistic education in Delhi's government schools, leading to pathbreaking initiatives such as the Happiness Curriculum and the Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum.

> *"Working class people never dreamed earlier. But Delhi government has made it possible- especially for education. Now we have big dreams!"*
>
> *-Parent, Delhi Government School*

> *"Attendance has increased in school after cleanliness and better plants. It is 'human nature' to gravitate towards better environment."*
>
> *-Student, Delhi Government School*

> *"Annual teacher trainings have become quite good. They are now 2-sided and this helps us to implement the learnings in the classroom"*
>
> *-Teacher, Delhi Government School*

Source: Figures and Testimonials have been retrieved from 'School Education Reforms in Delhi: 2015-2020', an independent report by Boston Consulting Group and the Directorate of Education, Government of Delhi.

EDUCATION REFORMS IN DELHI: A SNAPSHOT

Delhi implemented a broad range of interventions within its schooling system from infrastructural upgradation, to improvements in teacher training and development, and initiatives to raise foundational literacy and numeracy levels. Crucially, Delhi began its interventions by building new, world-class infrastructure and enhancing systemic capacity through training and development of teachers and heads of school, providing more autonomy to school heads and School Management Committees (SMCs). As these interventions injected positivity and motivation into the system, an enabling environment was created for reforms in teaching-learning.

Image: Activity in Happiness Class

Image: A Delhi Government School

Happiness Curriculum was introduced in Delhi Government Schools for students in nursery to grade 6 to enable them to build mindfulness through meditation, and healthy relationships with friends, family, and society.

Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum for students in grades 9 to 12 so they would develop a problem solver's mindset, and to create job providers, not just job seekers.

Nearly 8lakh students take Happiness and EMC classes daily, across Delhi.

Focus on 21st Century Skills

Chunauti and Mission Buniyaad: Strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy of all students to ensure minimum learning, so they are better prepared to follow grade appropriate coursework.

Building The Foundation: Literacy and Numeracy

Construction of new buildings and additional classrooms with high quality and modern facilities.

Upgradation of amenities such as desks, blackboards, sanitation facilities and provision of CCTV cameras, smart boards, sports facilities and libraries in schools.

World Class Infrastructure

Empowering Communities

Empowerment and strengthening of School Management Committees (SMC) through training and support. Allocation of INR 5-7 lakhs per SMC for school related expenditure, to promote decentralized decision-making.

Organisation of Mega PTMs to increase connect between parents, students, and teachers.

Transforming Teacher Training

Exposure visits and immersive learning programs for teachers and Heads of School in Cambridge, Finland, Singapore, and eminent Indian institutes.

Custom training program developed by IIM Ahmedabad, attended by every Head of School (HoS) in Delhi.

Mentor Teachers and Teacher Development Coordinators to provide day-to-day mentorship and academic support for teachers in schools .

Reinforcing Institutions

Recruitment of regular teachers and guest teachers to improve pupil-teacher ratio.

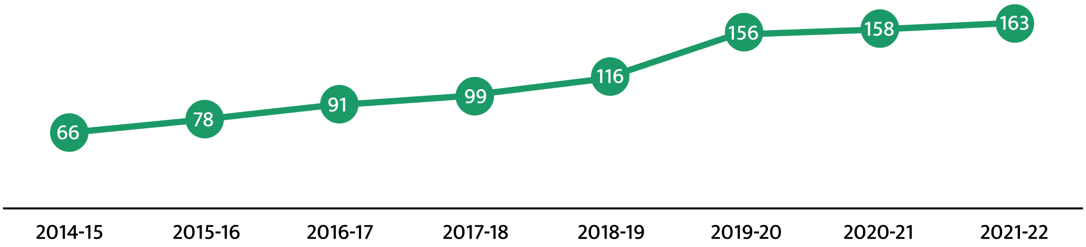
Outsourcing of non-core functions such as sanitisation, maintenance, and security.

Regulation of private school fees and enforcement of quotas for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in private schools.

Image: CM Arvind Kejriwal at Mega PTM in Delhi

Image: Teacher training workshop in Cambridge

Delhi's Education Budget (in INR 100 Crore)[1]



[1] *Source: Government of Delhi*

Key Drivers of Delhi's Education Revolution

Build a shared vision and commitment	• Dy. CM led an 8-day Jeevan Vidya Shivir workshop, where around fifty senior leaders spent time out of office discussing and reflecting on how to improve education.
Devolve power to stakeholders best placed to act	• Increased autonomy in school for HoS. • Increased financial powers of Secretary and Director Education, and HoS and SMCs of all schools, thereby enabling quicker decision-making and actions.
Motivate the frontline through dignity, respect, and care	• Increased salaries of guest teachers by 80-90% despite legal challenges. • Refurbished staffrooms for teachers. • Personalised letters and cards sent to parents and SMC members.
Invite and amplify voices from the ground	• Consultation and input sought from HoS and Mentor Teachers in the design of initiatives such as EMC. • Regular feedback channels set up post the initial implementation of new programs, allowing for their evolution based on field inputs.
Engage consistently and deeply with the field	• Education Minister connected with SMC members through WhatsApp for real-time feedback. • Actors at a senior level such as IAS officers and the Minister conduct weekly school visits.
Foster a culture of acknowledgement and celebration	• Incoming batch of students welcomed to school with a celebratory ceremony. • Pictures of champion teachers put across the city. • Teacher award functions conducted at a grand scale.

The Road Ahead

Moving forward, Delhi aims to leverage its early successes to propel student outcomes to greater heights.

To this end, the Delhi government has launched the **Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE)**. The Board envisions a shift from conventional rote learning, to the promotion of learning that focuses on complete understanding of a subject and its application. DBSE has partnered with the International Baccalaureate, known for its progressive assessment and pedagogy to further its aims.

The State has also launched 20 **Schools of Specialized Excellence (SoSE)**, which are affiliated to the Delhi Board. SoSEs are hubs of specialised learning, focusing on STEM, Humanities, Performing and Visual Arts, and 21st Century Skills, located across school zones.

Image: Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal with students

Furthermore, Delhi has launched **'Deshbhakti Curriculum'**, to instill the spirit of patriotism and nationhood among every child and to prepare them to be responsible citizens who shall contribute to nation-building. Presently, students from grades 6-12 across Delhi Schools attend Deshbhakti Classes.

Delhi Government is also fostering entrepreneurial spirit & future entrepreneurs through its **Business Blasters** programme. The programme supports 3 lakh students & 51,000 business ideas with 60 crore in seed funding. Students from grades 11 and 12 will receive seed money & mentorship from established entrepreneurs to build a start-up. Students from top 10 teams will be offered admission in business management courses in Delhi Government's colleges.

In tandem with these new initiatives, the Government of Delhi will strive to set new benchmarks of learning and provide an excellent education to all children.

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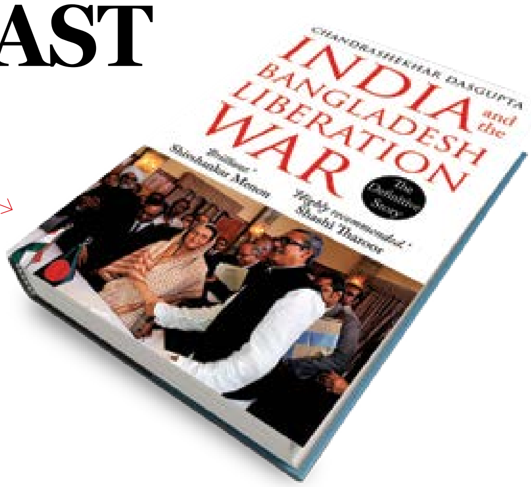
[2] *Source: 'School Education Reforms in Delhi: 2015-2020' An independent report by Boston Consulting Group*

THE CRISIS IN THE EAST

By Srinath Raghavan


CHANDRASHEKHAR DASGUPTA
INDIA and the BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR
'Brilliant' Shivshankar Menon
'Highly recommended' Shashi Tharoor
The Definitive Story

INDIA AND THE BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR
The Definitive Story
By Chandrashekhar Dasgupta
JUGGERNAUT
₹699; 328 pages

‘Grand Strategy’ is not a concept usually associated with India. It suggests a comprehensive effort, encompassing political and diplomatic, military and economic initiatives in pursuit of clearly defined objectives. At a time when the prime minister and foreign minister seem unable to coordinate their statements about China’s border transgressions, even petty strategy feels out of reach. Yet, as Chandrashekhar Dasgupta reminds us in his brilliant new book, there was at least one episode in independent India’s history that rose to the level of grand strategy: the Bangladesh crisis and war of 1971.

Dasgupta is not only a distinguished diplomat but also an accomplished diplomatic historian. His previous, deeply-researched book on the Kashmir conflict of 1947-48 remains required reading for all students of the subject. This book, too, is the product of years of research and reflection. Published to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the birth of Bangladesh, it will command the field for many more anniversaries to come.

In recent years, we have had a clutch of books on various aspects of the Bangladesh crisis, but there has been no sustained, full-length attempt at scrutinising India’s approach to crisis management and war. Dasgupta provides us a carefully argued and sceptical—not to say, revisionist—account of India’s choices and actions. Drawing on a host of documentary material, especially from the inhouse archives of the external affairs ministry, he methodically cuts down the massed ranks of popular misconception.

Did the Indian government actively foment Bengali resistance to Pakistani rule? On the contrary, Indian officials believed that a united Pakistan under the political leadership of the Bengalis was better suited to its interests, especially in blunting the Pakistan army’s obsession with Kashmir. Nor did New Delhi foresee the onslaught on the Bengalis by the Pakistan army. Only thereafter did India start developing its response.

Was Indira Gandhi minded to attack East Pakistan in May 1971, only to be dissuaded by the army chief, General Sam Manekshaw? This is a widely-held belief in India—not least among the military—purveyed by Manekshaw himself. Dasgupta irrefutably shows that the prime minister had made up her mind within days of the Pakistani crackdown that India would have to proceed step by step and shape the milieu before embarking on a military intervention. Her invitation to Manekshaw to provide his advice to the cabinet was aimed at calming the martial fervour of her senior colleagues. In fact, Dasgupta’s careful account of the evolution of the Indian army’s plans for intervention is hardly flattering to Manekshaw. The future Field Marshal was evidently unable to settle until the eve of the war the differing opinions within his own staff and subordinates on whether the ultimate military aim should be the capture of Dhaka.

The best and the most original parts of the book are those dealing with the Soviet Union. It is often assumed that the signing of the pact with Moscow in August 1971 girded New Delhi with a Soviet deterrent against Chinese intervention as well as Soviet vetoes in the UN security council. Drawing on documents hitherto unaccessed by historians, Dasgupta shows how reluctant Moscow really was in allowing India to use force to resolve the crisis. Even when Mrs Gandhi flew to Moscow at the end of September 1971, the Soviet leadership remained hesitant and divided about offering unstinting support to India. At one point in their meeting, Leonid Brezhnev even suggested a meeting between Mrs Gandhi and then Pakistan president Yahya Khan. Mrs Gandhi responded with a jab of the stiletto: “I doubt I could return to my country if I did this.” The Soviets eventually relented, but only towards the end of November 1971.

The book ends with a forensic account of the Simla Conference that lays to rest the hoary myth about India winning the war and losing the peace. Dasgupta shows beyond doubt that Mrs Gandhi never sought a final resolution on the Kashmir issue—owing primarily to her concern about giving up Indian claims to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

It may be wishful to think that those now loudly avowing the recovery of PoK will pick up this book. But anyone curious about how India midwifed the emergence of Bangladesh could do no better than reading this thorough and insightful account. ■

Srinath Raghavan *is a historian and author of* **The Most Dangerous Place: A History of the United States in South Asia**

STATE OF THE STATES

THE BEST STATES OF INDIA

In a year ravaged by the pandemic, the competitive spirit helped some states overcome adversity better than others. Presenting INDIA TODAY's annual State of the States survey and rankings

BY **KAUSHIK DEKA**

Illustration by **NILANJAN DAS**

INDIAN POLITICS HAS BEEN seeing an encouraging trend in the past few years. Every chief minister who is freshly elected to the office makes an identical promise: to make his state among the five top-performing ones in the country. The assurance may or may not come to fruition, but the lofty goal itself is a sign of the changing socio-political ambitions of the people and their expectations from the ruling class. It fosters competition among chief ministers, making all-encompassing economic growth the centrepiece of any political narrative. And in an economy ravaged by a year and a half of the Covid-19 pandemic, this motivation and competition can come in particularly useful.

The India Today Group can claim some of the credit for firing this competitive spirit. It was the first to introduce the concept of mapping the performance of India's states in 2003 in the form of the State of the States (SoS) survey. In the 19 years since, it has remained the most accurate annual report card of how the different states of India are doing. It was devised as a comprehensive and credible measure for assessing a state's socio-economic development to begin with, but, over the years, it has also evolved both in scope and methodology.

TAMIL NADU retains the top spot among the best performing big states of India for the **4th year in a row**

BIHAR has made a spectacular leap to the **No. 1 position among the most improved** big states this year from 9th rank last year

To avoid giving undue advantage or vice versa to states with a legacy of performance or under-achievement, the evaluation is carried out under two broad categories—best performing and most improved. The best performing category examines the absolute numbers of a state's performance for the latest year for which data is available. The most improved category records states' progress over the preceding five years.

The significance of this distinction is best reflected in the results of this year's SoS survey. Based on its progress in the past five years, Bihar has emerged as the most improved big state overall. It's a big

STATE OF
THE STATES

INDIA'S TOP BIG STATES

Winners of the India Today State of the States survey 2021

CATEGORY	BEST PERFORMING	MOST IMPROVED
OVERALL	TAMIL NADU	BIHAR
ECONOMY	TELANGANA	BIHAR
INFRASTRUCTURE	PUNJAB	JHARKHAND
AGRICULTURE	PUNJAB	MADHYA PRADESH
HEALTH	KERALA	HIMACHAL PRADESH
EDUCATION	HIMACHAL PRADESH	BIHAR
LAW & ORDER	GUJARAT	KARNATAKA & UTTAR PRADESH
GOVERNANCE	RAJASTHAN	WEST BENGAL
INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT	ANDHRA PRADESH	BIHAR
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	HARYANA	UTTAR PRADESH
TOURISM	KERALA	PUNJAB
ENVIRONMENT	KERALA	CHHATTISGARH
CLEANLINESS	PUNJAB	ASSAM

INDIA'S TOP SMALL STATES

CATEGORY	BEST PERFORMING	MOST IMPROVED
OVERALL	PUDUCHERRY	MANIPUR
ECONOMY	SIKKIM	MIZORAM
INFRASTRUCTURE	GOA	ARUNACHAL PRADESH
AGRICULTURE	TRIPURA	MANIPUR
HEALTH	PUDUCHERRY	MIZORAM
EDUCATION	GOA	MEGHALAYA
LAW & ORDER	NAGALAND	SIKKIM
GOVERNANCE	MANIPUR	ARUNACHAL PRADESH
INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT	MIZORAM	MEGHALAYA
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	DELHI	MIZORAM
TOURISM	GOA	MEGHALAYA
ENVIRONMENT	MIZORAM	SIKKIM
CLEANLINESS	GOA	PUDUCHERRY

BEST PERFORMING STATE IN HAPPINESS INDEX*

BIG STATE	KERALA	SMALL STATE	GOA

*Happiness Index has been introduced from this year. Please see methodology for parameters.

leap for the eastern state, which has for too long led the infamous BIMARU acronym, from ninth rank last year to the top rung now. This miracle has been made possible by a superlative improvement in education, agriculture, economy and infrastructure. The state's commitment to break the shackles of economic backwardness is evident—per capita development expenditure in Bihar grew at the rate of 17.9 per cent between 2014-15 and 2019-20, against the national average of 11.2 per cent in the same period. A higher participation of girls—at 1.05, the gender parity index (enrolment ratio of girls to boys) is the second highest in the country—has contributed to this big jump in education.

That said, Bihar still has miles to go in terms of absolute achievement. The state may have progressed at a much faster rate in the past five years given its low base, but it remains at the bottom among the best performing big states. It appears in 20th place in three lists of big states—economy, education and entrepreneurship. In five other categories—agriculture, health, governance, inclusive development and environment—it is among the bottom five of the best-performing states.

The same is true of Manipur, which has emerged as the most improved small state for the second successive time. From 2018, it has clocked an improved performance in seven out of 12 categories—economy, infrastructure, agriculture, health, governance, entrepreneurship and cleanliness. Yet, the state figures in ninth place among the 10 best performing small states. It finds itself in the same position as in 2018 across five categories—economy, infrastructure, agriculture, environment and cleanliness. Despite rapid progress in the past five years, Manipur remains bogged down by a legacy of poor performance and environment of violence.

If Bihar and Manipur exhibit one conundrum, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have the opposite problem. The two states are among the top five best performing big states, but in the bottom five in the most improved category. Of course, given the higher base, these states cannot be expected to match the rate of improvement of traditionally backward states. Puducherry and Goa reflect the same problem among the

PUDUCHERRY
emerges as the no. 1 best performing small state but is **8th among the 10 small states** in the most improved category

MANIPUR
tops the small states in the most improved category, but figures in **9th place among 10 small states** in the best performing stakes

GUJARAT
has been consistent in historical and current performances, coming in **4th in both the best performing and most improved big states** categories

SIKKIM
has shown consistency in historical and current performances, **featuring in 3rd place** in both the best performing and most improved small states categories

HIMACHAL PRADESH
has taken the biggest leap among big states in the best performing category, jumping **to 2nd position this year from 7th place in 2018**

MAHARASHTRA
has shown a significant jump in the most improved big state category by moving to **8th position this year from 18th in 2018**

best-performing small states. They figure among the top three in this category, but slip to the bottom three among the most improved small states.

Then there are those states that have done uniformly well in both historical and recent performances. Gujarat, for instance, ranks fourth both in the best performing and most improved category for big states. Likewise, Sikkim occupies third position in both categories for small states; Mizoram ranks second in the most improved category but does not do too badly in the best performing stakes either, bagging the fourth position.

In the 19th edition of our survey, we have added a new category—the happiness index. Though there is no universal definition or indicator of citizens' happiness, the experts INDIA TODAY consulted agreed that a state's performance across a given set of categories—prosperity, education, health, governance, infrastructure, law and order, environment and cleanliness—could determine how happy its people are. Happiness, thus, comes from the ease of living. Measuring this ease of living across the country is the objective of our survey. Who, after all, minds being in a permanent state of happiness? ■

▸ METHODOLOGY

HOW THE STATES WERE RANKED

The India Today State of the States 2021 study was conducted by Delhi-based premier research agency Marketing and Development Research Associates (MDRA). The robust methodology is designed to rank the states on the basis of most relevant and exhaustive data, covering aspects crucial to foster inter-state competition and uphold the true spirit of India's federal structure. The states have been ranked under two broad groups:

Best-performing states

- Based on a state's latest performance in a category
- Based on most recent data across multiple parameters

Most-improved states

- Measuring a state's improvement in the past 5 years
- Based on positive changes (outcome-based) in the past 5 years

States were further divided into big and small on the basis of geographical area and population. Big states have their own advantages and disadvantages vis-à-vis the small ones. States with an area of over 35,000 sq. km and population of over 5 million were clubbed as big, the rest small. Jammu & Kashmir was not considered due to the change in its status.

Twelve categories were identified for comparison, and a new category–Happiness Index–was added.

Several parameters were fixed in each category. Based on inputs from experts–academics, policymakers and policy influencers such as NITI Aayog representatives, think-tanks, policy research organisations, sociologists and economists–123 parameters were finalised for evaluating the best performing states and 88 for the most improved ones. The relative weights of the parameters were finalised in consultation with the experts, INDIA TODAY editors and the MDRA team.

To ensure no state got undue advantage or vice versa, data based on population or geographical size, as the case required, was normalised. Based on the weights determined for each attribute, sectoral rankings were derived. Parameter level weights were used to determine the best performing and most improved states overall.

A large MDRA team, led by executive director Abhishek Agrawal, project director Abnish Jha, assistant research manager Rajan Chauhan, executive-EDP Manveer Singh, research executive Somendra Shahi, and assisted by statisticians and econometricians, worked on this voluminous project from July to November 2021.

CATEGORY-WISE PARAMETERS OF SoS

ECONOMY: Net per capita Income; % of population above poverty line; ratio of capital expenditure to population; GSVA for tertiary sector/ population; GSVA for secondary sector/ population; Consumer Price Index; unemployment rate; no. of banks per 1 lakh people; ratio of commercial bank credit per 1 lakh people; labour force participation (15-59 years) urban (per 1,000); FDI inflow; implemented IEM / proposed IEM; proportion of state FDI inflow to India's total FDI; outstanding liabilities to population; Gross Capital Formation to population

INFRASTRUCTURE: Ratio of (surfaced + unsurfaced) road length to total area; length of national highways and state highways to total area; ratio of road length to vehicles; average hours of power supply in a day to rural areas; % of households with access to drinking water/ piped water; length of railway lines to total area; no. of flights to population; no. of stadiums to population; (AMRUTH) proposed total project fund by state govt. & ULB to population; no. of post offices to population; no. of mobile subscribers to population; no. of telephone connections (landlines) to population; statewise per capita availability of power; no. of internet subscribers to population; no. of smart cities to total districts

AGRICULTURE: Money spent on agriculture in last budget compared to area of agriculture; contribution of agriculture to GSDP; primary GSVA to rural population; % of area irrigated of the total cultivated land; productivity–crop produced to total cultivated land; loans extended to agriculture to rural households; % of cropped area under cash crops

HEALTH: Expenditure on health per person; IMR (infant mortality rate); MMR (maternal mortality rate); registered government doctors to population; no. of government hospitals per 1 lakh people; average patients served per government hospital; no. of beds per government hospital; life expectancy; Covid management

EDUCATION: Total expenditure of education department to population (10-14 years); literacy rate (%); Gender Parity Index (primary & middle school); dropout rate (primary education + middle education + secondary education); no. of colleges/ population in the 15 to 19-year age group; no. of schools/ population in the 10 to 14-year age group; institutes of national importance to population (15-23 years); no. of central universities & national law universities to population (15-23 years); no. of higher educational institutions (universities + standalone institutions) to population (15-23 years)

LAW & ORDER: Actual strength of civil policemen per 1 lakh people; total cases (under IPC) to population; incidents of murder to population; incidents of kidnapping to population; incidents of rape to population; incident of molestation to population; incidents of riots to population; pending cases/ population

GOVERNANCE: MLAs with criminal cases to total MLAs; % of women representatives in panchayats; Panchayat Devolution Index; no. of e-services rolled out by state governments for citizen participation; no. of operational common service centres (CSCs) to population; % of gram panchayats covered by CSCs; Ease of Doing Business Index (DPIIT); progress on Digital India programme

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT: % of BPL population; progress in poverty alleviation; accounts opened under PM-JDY (Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana) to population; ratio of domestic LPG consumers to total households; no. of people who have benefitted from NREGA; progress in Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana; % of households with any usual member covered by health scheme; % of PDS offtake; average days of wage provided per household; % of 20-24 year-old women married before 18 years; % of children engaged in labour

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Ease of Doing Business Index (DPIIT); progress on Startup India; progress on Skill India; progress in Mudra Bank credit fund (disbursement amount); total no. of start-ups (new companies registered) in the state to population

TOURISM: No. of domestic tourists; no. of foreign tourists; funds spent on tourism promotion to tourist population; total no. of airports to population; total no. of railway stations to population; crime against tourists to tourist population; no. of registered accommodation to tourist population; no. of five-star hotels to tourist population; road length to tourist population; UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India (Cultural + Natural + Mixed) to tourist population; national parks to tourist population; wildlife sanctuaries to tourist population; revenue from tourism (in lakh) to tourist population; inland waterways to tourist population

ENVIRONMENT: SO_2 concentration (residential + industrial); NO_2 concentration (residential + industrial); PM 10 concentration (residential + industrial); tree cover to total geographical area; PM 2.5 concentration (residential + industrial); forest cover to total geographical area

CLEANLINESS: % of households with improved sanitation facility; % of schools with separate toilet facility for girls; % of households using improved source of drinking water; % of households using clean fuel for cooking; % of renewable energy to total installed capacity; % of municipal solid waste processing

HAPPINESS INDEX: Prosperity (per capita income; outstanding liabilities to population; CPI; unemployment rate); scores from education rankings; scores from health rankings; scores from governance ranking; scores from infrastructure ranking; scores from law & order rankings; scores from environment rankings; scores from cleanliness rankings

WE AREN'T A COURT OF JUDGEMENT

To tell you what's good or bad,
what mindset you should have,
what ideology you should follow,
who is right or wrong.

These are your decisions to make.
Never ours.

We believe in just one thing.
Your voice matters.
Irrespective of who you are,
where you come from,
where you stand,
what you do,
and who you support.

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And every right finds a voice.

WE'RE ALWAYS
IN CONVERSATION
WITH YOU.

INDIA TODAY GROUP

INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC
NEWSROOM

THE HALL OF FAME

Ever since the State of the States survey was introduced in 2003, there has been a constant endeavour to make the methodology more robust and comprehensive. Regular revisions happened with addition of new parameters. To distinguish legacy performances from current improvements, states were also evaluated based on the performances of the past five years in the most improved category. New winners emerged while past performers fought hard to retain their ranks. In its 19th year, the State of the Survey looks back at the top five winners—Big and Small—over the years. Irrespective of the methodology, these 10 states made the highest number of appearances in the top five ranks.

TOP FIVE BIG STATES OVER THE YEARS

YEAR	RANK 1	RANK 2	RANK 3	RANK 4	RANK 5
2003*	Goa	Delhi	Punjab	Kerala	Himachal Pradesh
2004	Punjab	Kerala	Himachal Pradesh	Tamil Nadu	Haryana
2005	Punjab	Kerala	Himachal Pradesh	Tamil Nadu	Haryana
2006	Punjab	Kerala	Himachal Pradesh	Tamil Nadu	Haryana
2007	Punjab	Kerala	Himachal Pradesh	Tamil Nadu	Gujarat
2008	Punjab	Kerala	Himachal Pradesh	Kerala	Haryana
2009	Punjab	Himachal Pradesh	Tamil Nadu	Kerala	Gujarat
2010	Himachal Pradesh	Punjab	Tamil Nadu	Kerala	Gujarat
2011**	Maharashtra	Gujarat	Odisha	Haryana	Tamil Nadu
2012	Gujarat	Kerala	Maharashtra	Tamil Nadu	Haryana
2013	Kerala	Andhra Pradesh	Tamil Nadu	Gujarat	Haryana
2014	Tamil Nadu	Punjab	Kerala	Uttarakhand	Andhra Pradesh
2015	Gujarat	Kerala	Karnataka	Jammu and Kashmir	Odisha
2016	Kerala	Tamil Nadu	Andhra Pradesh	Himachal Pradesh	Maharashtra
2017	Himachal Pradesh	Telangana	Karnataka	Gujarat	Haryana
2018 BP#	Tamil Nadu	Haryana	Kerala	Gujarat	Punjab
2018 MI#	Assam	J&K	Madhya Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh	Chhattisgarh
2019 BP	Tamil Nadu	Himachal Pradesh	Haryana	Punjab	Kerala
2019 MI	Assam	Andhra Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Chhattisgarh
2020 BP	Tamil Nadu	Himachal Pradesh	Punjab	Kerala	Gujarat
2020 MI	Assam	Andhra Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh	West Bengal	Haryana
2021 BP	Tamil Nadu	Himachal Pradesh	Kerala	Gujarat	Punjab
2021 MI	Bihar	Assam	Madhya Pradesh	Gujarat	Telangana

**In 2003, big and small states were ranked together; ** In 2011, only most improved states were ranked*
#From 2018, states have been ranked under two categories–Best Performing (BP) and Most Improved (MI)

TOP PERFORMERS IN THE BEST PERFORMING CATEGORY

BIG STATES

STATE	APPEARANCES IN THE TOP 5
Kerala	**17**
Tamil Nadu	**13**
Punjab	**13**
Himachal Pradesh	**13**
Gujarat	**9**

SMALL STATES

STATE	APPEARANCES IN THE TOP 5
Delhi	**17**
Goa	**16**
Sikkim	**16**
Puducherry	**15**
Mizoram	**11**

TOP PERFORMERS IN THE MOST IMPROVED CATEGORY

BIG STATES

STATE	APPEARANCES IN THE TOP 5
Assam	**4**
Madhya Pradesh	**4**

SMALL STATES

STATE	APPEARANCES IN THE TOP 5
Tripura	**4**
Mizoram	**4**
Meghalaya	**4**
Arunachal Pradesh	**3**
Nagaland	**3**

TOP FIVE SMALL STATES OVER THE YEARS

YEAR	RANK 1	RANK 2	RANK 3	RANK 4	RANK 5
2004	Puducherry	Delhi	Chandigarh	Mizoram	Goa
2005	Goa	Delhi	Puducherry	Mizoram	Sikkim
2006	Puducherry	Goa	Delhi	Sikkim	Mizoram
2007	Puducherry	Goa	Delhi	Sikkim	Mizoram
2008	Delhi	Goa	Puducherry	Sikkim	Mizoram
2009	Delhi	Puducherry	Goa	Mizoram	Sikkim
2010	Delhi	Puducherry	Goa	Sikkim	Mizoram
2011**	Arunachal Pradesh	Puducherry	Sikkim	Goa	Tripura
2012	Delhi	Mizoram	Sikkim	Manipur	Tripura
2013	Goa	Delhi	Manipur	Meghalaya	Sikkim
2014	Goa	Puducherry	Nagaland	Arunachal Pradesh	Sikkim
2015	Sikkim	Puducherry	Meghalaya	Delhi	Tripura
2016	Goa	Puducherry	Delhi	Sikkim	Manipur
2017	Puducherry	Sikkim	Delhi	Goa	Arunachal Pradesh
2018 BP[#]	Puducherry	Goa	Delhi	Sikkim	Mizoram
2018 MI[#]	Tripura	Arunachal Pradesh	Nagaland	Mizoram	Meghalaya
2019 BP	Goa	Puducherry	Sikkim	Delhi	Mizoram
2019 MI	Tripura	Nagaland	Arunachal Pradesh	Goa	Mizoram
2020 BP	Goa	Puducherry	Delhi	Sikkim	Tripura
2020 MI	Manipur	Tripura	Meghalaya	Nagaland	Mizoram
2021 BP	Puducherry	Goa	Sikkim	Mizoram	Delhi
2021 MI	Manipur	Mizoram	Sikkim	Meghalaya	Nagaland
2021 MI	Bihar	Assam	Madhya Pradesh	Gujarat	Telangana

*Small states were ranked separately from 2004, big and small states were ranked together earlier; ** In 2011, only most improved states were ranked*

[#] From 2018, states have been ranked under two categories–Best Performing (BP) and Most Improved (MI)

TAMIL NADU: *BEST PERFORMING BIG STATE OVERALL*

FOR ONE AND ALL

A strong foundation and inclusive growth have helped Tamil Nadu survive the pandemic and stay on its development trajectory

By Amarnath K. Menon

Inclusive growth and education have long been a priority of successive Tamil Nadu governments. It should come as no surprise therefore that Tamil Nadu is tied in third place with Himachal Pradesh on the Sustainable Development Goals dashboard. The health of the state is what stood it in good stead during the pandemic—Tamil Nadu was one of the few states that did not register negative growth in the period.

With a gross state domestic product of $290 billion or Rs 21.6 lakh crore, Tamil Nadu is India's second-largest economy. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's dream now is to make it a trillion dollar economy.

In pursuit of that goal, the state has set up an economic advisory council with world-renowned economists on board. The state plans to identify specific sectors, analyse their potential for growth, and fortify them to withstand any economic shock. The state has signed MoUs for 49 potential projects involving an investment of Rs 28,508 crore and with the potential to employ 83,000 people.

To help farmers, the state is implementing various water conservation initiatives with community participation, especially as rivers and other water bodies are being lost to encroachment or other reasons.

There are challenges too. State finance minister P. Thiagarajan cannot stop emphasising how 20.7 million families are in debt of an average Rs 2.6 lakh each. The state is eager to set up its own payments bank to help efficient management of funds while implementing welfare schemes. As CM Stalin says, "Development and economic growth are about ensuring that the oppressed and marginalised benefit from the efforts to achieve growth. The Dravidian philosophy is based on that inclusive social justice model." ■

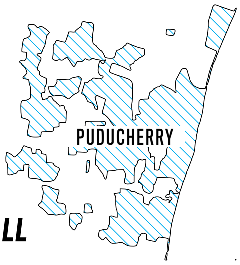
JAISON G

LIFE IN A METRO
The metro rail glides through Kathipara, Chennai

▶ BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES OVERALL

STATE	SCORE OUT OF 2080	2021	2020	2019	2018
TAMIL NADU	1,303.5	◂▸ **1**	1	1	1
HIMACHAL PRADESH	1,257.2	◂▸ **2**	2	2	7
KERALA	1,252.5	▲ **3**	4	5	3
GUJARAT	1,226.4	▲ **4**	5	6	4
PUNJAB	1,22 3.4	▼ **5**	3	4	5
ANDHRA PRADESH	1,214.6	▲ **6**	7	8	10
TELANGANA	1,204.8	▲ **7**	9	10	9
HARYANA	1,199.9	▼ **8**	6	3	2
MAHARASHTRA	1,166.0	▼ **9**	8	9	8
KARNATAKA	1,141.5	▲ **10**	11	7	6
UTTARAKHAND	1,118.2	▲ **11**	12	11	11
WEST BENGAL	1,038.5	▼ **12**	10	12	13
MADHYA PRADESH	979.3	◂▸ **13**	13	14	12
RAJASTHAN	933.9	◂▸ **14**	14	13	15
CHHATTISGARH	908.5	◂▸ **15**	15	16	17
ODISHA	901.1	◂▸ **16**	16	17	18
ASSAM	878.2	▲ **17**	19	18	19
UTTAR PRADESH	829.8	▼ **18**	17	15	14
JHARKHAND	763.5	▼ **19**	18	19	21
BIHAR	753.1	◂▸ **20**	20	20	20

PUDUCHERRY
BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATE OVERALL



A CROWN JEWEL

The erstwhile French colony retains its cosmopolitanism and expects nothing less than the best in governance

By Amarnath K. Menon

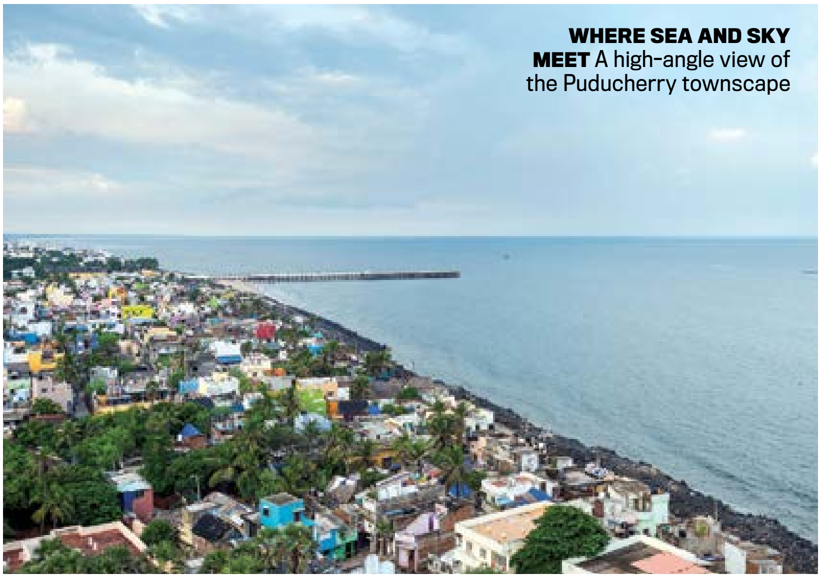
BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES OVERALL

STATE	SCORE OUT OF 2080	2021	2020	2019	2018
PUDUCHERRY	1,291.8	▲ **1**	2	2	1
GOA	1,290.3	▼ **2**	1	1	2
SIKKIM	1,182.8	▲ **3**	4	3	4
MIZORAM	1,141.9	▲ **4**	6	5	5
DELHI	1,061.9	▼ **5**	3	4	3
TRIPURA	1,060.6	▼ **6**	5	6	8
NAGALAND	1,022.3	◀▶ **7**	7	7	7
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	1,010.7	▲ **8**	10	8	6
MANIPUR	930.2	▼ **9**	8	10	9
MEGHALAYA	920.7	▼ **10**	9	9	10

With a more educated population that demands better services, a responsive governance system overall with an efficient public distribution system and a focus on health, Puducherry has emerged ahead of other small states and Union territories.

Farming and tourism are the two mainstays of its economy. Two out of every five residents rely on agriculture for a livelihood. Its beaches and French architecture make it an attractive destination for tourists.

Chief Minister M. Rangasamy is looking at the Union government to fund Rs 225 crore to acquire 216 acres in Tamil Nadu's Villipuram district and 54 acres in the Union Territory to expand the airport, an imperative to boost tourism. A Film City and a theme park are also slated to come up on a 100 acre site at Manapet beach in public-private partnership mode.



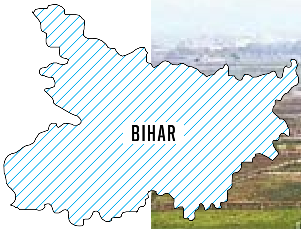
WHERE SEA AND SKY MEET A high-angle view of the Puducherry townscape

ALAMY

Puducherry is also looking to establish two mini fishing harbours, one at Pannithittu in the Puducherry region and the other in T.R. Pattinam in the Karaikal region. The UT has 27 marine fishing villages, 23 inland fishing villages/ hamlets and a fisherman population of 95,467.

Evolving as an investment destination, Puducherry is fast developing infrastructure to attract business. This includes initiatives to transform the state into an electricity surplus area. As of April 2021, Puducherry had a total installed power-generation capacity of 380.43 MW.

Puducherry's tax-free budget for 2021-22 was Rs 9,924.41 crore. Its GSDP growth is around 10 per cent, as against the national average of 7-8 per cent. And economic health, as one knows, is the secret of the well-being of the residents of any state. ■



BIHAR: *MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE OVERALL*

A RURAL THRUST

The focus on rural women and economy has helped the state reap rich returns

By Amitabh Srivastava

THE FAST LANE
The AIIMS-Digha elevated road in Patna

SANTOSH KUMAR/ GETTY IMAGES

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES OVERALL

STATE	SCORE OUT OF 2,000	2021	2020	2019	2018
BIHAR	1,189.2	▲ **1**	9	4	7
ASSAM	1,156.4	▼ **2**	1	1	1
MADHYA PRADESH	1,137.5	◀▶ **3**	3	3	3
GUJARAT	1,117.8	▲ **4**	11	13	17
TELANGANA	1,116.7	▲ **5**	10	9	14
ANDHRA PRADESH	1,091.0	▼ **6**	2	2	8
WEST BENGAL	1,088.4	▼ **7**	4	8	13
MAHARASHTRA	1,074.5	▲ **8**	14	15	18
HARYANA	1,071.8	▼ **9**	5	17	15
JHARKHAND	1,067.5	▼ **10**	7	6	6
CHHATTISGARH	1,045.0	▼ **11**	6	5	5
ODISHA	1,041.3	▼ **12**	8	11	10
UTTAR PRADESH	1,038.7	▼ **13**	17	7	4
RAJASTHAN	1,022.0	▼ **14**	13	14	11
PUNJAB	1,011.2	▼ **15**	16	16	20
TAMIL NADU	964.3	▲ **16**	19	19	16
KARNATAKA	959.7	▼ **17**	15	12	9
HIMACHAL PRADESH	922.7	▼ **18**	12	10	12
UTTARAKHAND	886.0	▼ **19**	20	20	19
KERALA	858.5	▼ **20**	18	18	21

For Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar, development is not a destination but a journey. When he started the journey 16 years ago, his priorities were to restore the rule of law and pull Bihar out of poverty. He then went on to empower the state's girls and women through education and employment. Now, hit by the pandemic, on Nitish's to-do list is strengthening the rural economy, enhancing the skills of the youth and employment generation.

The effort has shown results as Bihar emerges as the most improved big state overall this year. Its performance has been above average in 9 out of 12 parameters (*see methodology*), and it has topped the rankings in inclusive development, economy and education.

According to the Bihar Economic Survey 2020-21, the state's economy grew at 10.5 per cent. Key to this has been the government's Jeevika mission, aimed at the social and economic empowerment of rural households.

Women's empowerment has continued apace, through SHGs (self-help groups). Currently, there are more than a million SHGs, who have been provided credit of Rs 13,400 crore. Indeed, money has not been a constraint. The Rs 2.18 lakh crore budget this year was the state's largest ever. ■

MANIPUR: *MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATE OVERALL*

NORTHEAST'S PRIDE

Relative peace in the state has translated into economic gain and progress

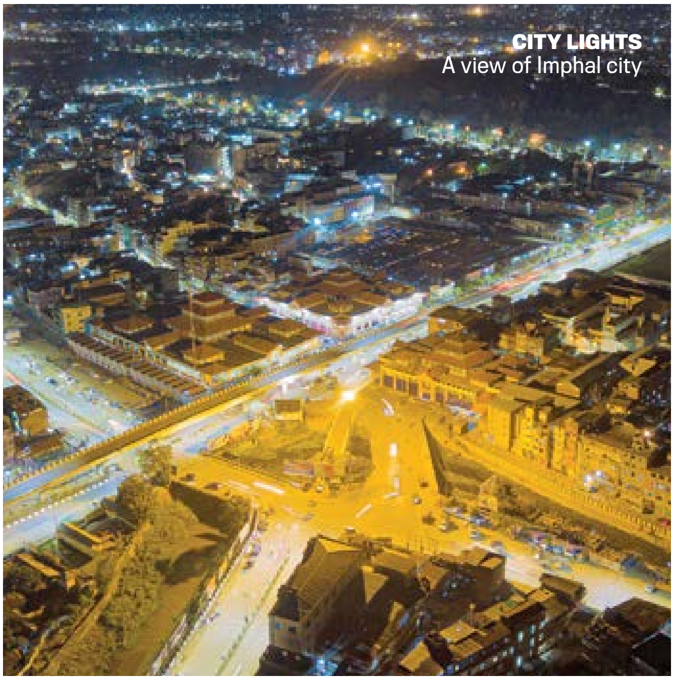
By Kaushik Deka

Manipur seems to be making a habit of excellence. The state has emerged as the most improved small state in the country for the second successive year. Since 2018, when new parameters were added, it has improved its performance in seven out of 12 categories—economy, infrastructure, agriculture, health, governance, entrepreneurship and cleanliness. And while it has topped the list of small states that have improved the most in agriculture, it is among the top three most improved small states in eight other categories.

The state's chief minister, N. Biren Singh, attributes Manipur's success to the relative peaceful environment. Before he took over, economic road blockades had become an almost annual feature. People would have to shell out Rs 2,000 for an LPG cylinder and Rs 200 for a litre of petrol in the grey market. There has been no such blockade in the past four years that Singh has been at the helm. Barring the recent attack on a convoy of the Indian army, in which seven personnel lost their lives, there has been no major incident of terrorism also in the past six years—terror-related incidents have come down from over 700 in 2014 to 113 in 2020.

With peace have come massive gains—the inflow of international tourists has gone up by more than 200 per cent since 2016. There has also been a spike in economic activities, with the state showing healthy growth. The state's GSDP has expanded at a CAGR of 14.05 per cent between 2015-16 and 2020-21. The state has also seen remarkable growth in the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector. Registration of businesses in the state is nearly 75 per cent higher than all other Northeast states put together.

Singh, however, wants equitable distribution of the fruits of development and believes good governance is the key to it. Manipur is the first state in India to set up the National e-Governance Plan's 4-core infrastructure—a common service centre, a statewide area network, a state data centre and portal, and a state service delivery gateway and e-forms. "Service delivery," says the chief minister, "has been one of our key focus areas. I believe the ultimate barometer of governance is the satisfaction of citizens." For Singh, it's a religion. ■



CITY LIGHTS
A view of Imphal city

SHUTTERSTOCK

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES OVERALL

STATE	SCORE OUT OF 2000	2021	2020	2019	2018
MANIPUR	1,233.1	◀▶ **1**	1	8	9
MIZORAM	1,159.0	▲ **2**	5	6	4
SIKKIM	1,097.1	▲ **3**	6	5	8
MEGHALAYA	1,090.7	▼ **4**	3	7	5
NAGALAND	1,046.9	▼ **5**	4	2	3
TRIPURA	1,035.6	▼ **6**	2	1	1
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	1,017.5	▲ **7**	8	3	2
PUDUCHERRY	868.0	▲ **8**	10	9	7
DELHI	818.6	◀▶ **9**	9	10	10
GOA	790.6	▼ **10**	7	4	6

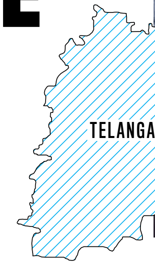
TELANGANA: *BEST PERFORMING BIG STATE IN ECONOMY*

STAYING THE COURSE

Telangana has not allowed the Covid crisis to mar its growth trajectory. It now contributes 5 per cent to the country's GDP

By Amarnath K. Menon

THE GLITTER IS BACK Crowds at a crafts and jewellery exhibition in Hyderabad



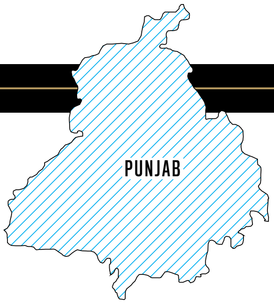
Telangana's economy has been resilient and shown remarkable growth. The net per capita income (PCI) of Rs 2,33,325 was the second highest among big states in 2019-20, and rose to Rs 2,37,632 in 2020-21 when the all-India national PCI was Rs 1,28,829.

Telangana is the 11th largest state in geographical area and 12th in terms of population in the country. However, it stood fourth (Rs 8,10,503 crore in 2020-21) in contributing to the economy of the country, with only Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and West Bengal ahead of it. "Telangana, which came into being just seven years back, now contributes 5 per cent to the country's GDP," says the state minister for industries, IT and urban development K.T. Rama Rao.

Despite the Covid-19 crisis, the state economy has taken impressive strides in 2020-21, with Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) touching Rs 9,80,407 crore at a 2.4 per cent growth rate. In comparison, the economic output (gross domestic product or GDP) at the national level fell by three per cent. The resilience was led by agriculture and allied sectors, which grew by 18.5 per cent in Telangana, dwarfing the 6.6 per cent growth of these sectors at the national level. ■

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES ECONOMY

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
TELANGANA	▲ 1	2	2	6
GUJARAT	▼ 2	1	1	2
HARYANA	▲ 3	5	7	7
TAMIL NADU	▼ 4	3	3	5
MAHARASHTRA	▲ 5	8	5	1
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▲ 6	7	8	8
KARNATAKA	▼ 7	4	4	3
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼ 8	6	6	10
KERALA	▲ 9	10	10	11
PUNJAB	▲ 10	11	15	15
UTTARAKHAND	▼ 11	9	9	4
WEST BENGAL	◄► 12	12	13	16
MADHYA PRADESH	▲ 13	16	16	14
RAJASTHAN	▲ 14	15	14	17
CHHATTISGARH	▼ 15	14	11	12
ODISHA	▼ 16	13	12	9
JHARKHAND	▲ 17	19	18	13
ASSAM	▼ 18	17	17	19
UTTAR PRADESH	▼ 19	18	19	20
BIHAR	◄► 20	20	20	21



PUNJAB: ***BEST PERFORMING BIG STATE IN INFRASTRUCTURE, AGRICULTURE AND CLEANLINESS***

FIELDS OF GLORY

Punjab's outstanding performance in agriculture has led to similar achievements in infrastructure and other areas

By Anilesh S. Mahajan

On November 24, amongst the other bills to be tabled in the winter session of Parliament, the Union cabinet cleared the Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021, paving the way to nullify the three contentious farm laws, bringing joy to the state's farmers who had vehemently opposed it. The fields of Punjab produce about 19 per cent of the nation's wheat and 12 per cent of its paddy. The central agencies procure 85 per cent of the produce that comes to market, that too on the declared minimum support price (MSP).

In the past few years, the cotton belt in the Malwa region has seen a surge in production after years of slack output. In 2020-21, the area under cotton production was more than 500,000 hectares. A major reason for this was the MSP, which was enhanced to Rs 6,025 per quintal this year. Half of the produce from Punjab is bought by the central agency, Cotton Corporation of India (CCI).

As an agricultural state, Punjab has the fortune of having several rivers flowing through it. However, a large part of the hinterland is still dependent on groundwater, with diesel- and electric-run borewell pumps used to irrigate the fields. And this is where the state faces a major challenge. The paddy crop requires 5,000 litres of water per kilogram, which is itself dependent on a continu-

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES INFRASTRUCTURE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
PUNJAB	◀▶ 1	1	1	3
MAHARASHTRA	▲ 2	4	4	8
KERALA	◀▶ 3	3	3	5
TAMIL NADU	▼ 4	2	2	2
GUJARAT	◀▶ 5	5	5	1
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▲ 6	9	8	6
TELANGANA	▲ 7	8	9	10
ANDHRA PRADESH	▲ 8	11	10	9
KARNATAKA	▼ 9	7	6	7
WEST BENGAL	▲ 10	12	12	12
HARYANA	▼ 11	6	7	4
UTTARAKHAND	▼ 12	10	11	11
ODISHA	▲ 13	14	15	14
BIHAR	▲ 14	18	16	21
MADHYA PRADESH	▲ 15	17	18	18
RAJASTHAN	▼ 16	13	14	13
ASSAM	▲ 16	19	17	19
CHHATTISGARH	▼ 18	16	20	16
UTTAR PRADESH	▼ 19	15	13	17
JHARKHAND	◀▶ 20	20	19	20

GOLDEN GRAIN
The wheat harvest in Atari village, near Amritsar

AFP

ous supply of electricity. Punjab is among the few states which still supplies free electricity to farms. Ultimately, this leads to increased costs for the state government. According to RBI statistics, the state spends about Rs 1.5 lakh per hectare as subsidy.

Punjab's progress in agriculture reflects in its improved infrastructure too. All the villages are connected with bitumen roads. Apart from funds from the PM Gram Sadak Yojna, Punjab's Mandi Board uses the fees, tax and levies on central procurement, roughly 6.5 per cent, to construct and repair village roads. In the past few years, the state's highways, too, have improved drastically. Punjab was also among the first states to provide electricity to every household, and the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) shows it has nearly universal coverage of drinking water. Signs of affluence abound: TRAI data shows that Punjab has 1,241 mobiles for 1,000 residents, the third highest in the country.

Punjab is also rapidly improving in urban sanitation. NHFS data shows that most households have access to proper sanitation; 96 per cent schools also have toilets for girl students. What the state still lacks is good garbage disposal mechanisms, only 60 per cent of the municipalities have one in place. ■

SPRUCING UP
Cleanliness drive in Amritsar in March

SAMEER SEHGAL/ GETTY IMAGES

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES AGRICULTURE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
PUNJAB	◀▶ 1	1	1	1
HARYANA	◀▶ 2	2	2	2
ANDHRA PRADESH	▲ 3	5	7	9
TELANGANA	▲ 4	10	11	15
TAMIL NADU	▲ 5	8	6	4
MADHYA PRADESH	▼ 6	4	4	5
WEST BENGAL	▼ 7	3	3	7
UTTARAKHAND	▲ 8	11	10	6
HIMACHAL PRADESH	◀▶ 9	9	14	14
GUJARAT	▼ 10	7	8	8
CHHATTISGARH	▲ 11	17	19	21
UTTAR PRADESH	▼ 12	6	5	3
ODISHA	▲ 13	16	20	19
JHARKHAND	▼ 14	12	18	16
RAJASTHAN	▲ 15	19	15	17
BIHAR	▼ 16	13	13	11
MAHARASHTRA	▲ 17	18	12	13
KARNATAKA	▼ 18	14	9	10
ASSAM	▼ 19	15	17	18
KERALA	◀▶ 20	20	16	20

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES CLEANLINESS

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
PUNJAB	▲ 1	5	2	2
GUJARAT	▲ 2	4	8	7
KERALA	▼ 3	2	1	1
TELANGANA	▲ 4	8	12	12
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼ 5	1	3	6
KARNATAKA	▲ 6	11	13	9
TAMIL NADU	▼ 7	3	7	5
ANDHRA PRADESH	▲ 8	13	11	11
UTTAR PRADESH	▲ 9	10	9	15
MAHARASHTRA	▼ 10	6	6	8
HARYANA	▼ 11	7	4	3
RAJASTHAN	▼ 12	9	14	14
MADHYA PRADESH	▲ 13	14	18	18
WEST BENGAL	▲ 14	15	10	13
BIHAR	▲ 15	17	16	19
UTTARAKHAND	▼ 16	12	5	4
CHHATTISGARH	▼ 17	16	17	17
JHARKHAND	▲ 18	19	19	20
ODISHA	▼ 19	18	15	21
ASSAM	◀▶ 20	20	20	16

SIGHTS UNSEEN A martial dance welcome for cruise ship tourists in Kochi

KERALA: ***BEST PERFORMING BIG STATE IN HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM***

A GREEN CANOPY

Kerala's world-class health infrastructure and focus on environment hold it in good stead

By Jeemon Jacob

Kerala continues to maintain a steady lead in its core sectors such as health, environment and tourism despite the Covid-19 challenges. The Left Democratic Front government headed by Pinarayi Vijayan designed strategies to offer the best medical care and social support during the pandemic. The state has the best health indicators with lowest infant mortality rate among the big states at seven per 1,000 live births and a life expectancy of 75 years. Kerala has been steadily increasing expenditure on public health and to improve infrastructure in government hospitals since the

▶ BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES HEALTH

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
KERALA	◀▶ 1	1	2	2
ANDHRA PRADESH	▲ 2	5	5	8
HARYANA	▲ 3	9	10	10
KARNATAKA	▲ 4	12	7	7
TAMIL NADU	▼ 5	3	3	4
GUJARAT	▲ 6	8	9	9
UTTARAKHAND	▲ 7	11	12	19
TELANGANA	▼ 8	6	4	6
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼ 9	2	1	3
MAHARASHTRA	▼ 10	4	8	5
ASSAM	▲ 11	18	15	21
MADHYA PRADESH	▲ 12	17	16	15
ODISHA	▲ 13	15	17	18
WEST BENGAL	▼ 14	7	11	12
RAJASTHAN	▼ 15	13	13	11
PUNJAB	▼ 16	10	6	14
JHARKHAND	▼ 17	16	18	20
CHHATTISGARH	▼ 18	14	14	17
BIHAR	▲ 18	19	19	16
UTTAR PRADESH	◀▶ 20	20	20	13

SHUTTERSTOCK

VERDANT VISTA
The Anayirankal reservoir in Munnar

Aardram Mission was introduced in 2016. It currently has four government hospitals per one lakh people. “We are the best Covid vaccinated state with 95.5 per cent of the targeted population covered (above 18 years); among them 60.2 per cent have received their second dose too. We also introduced tele-medicine consultation with super-specialty doctors and opened special clinics for post-Covid ailments,” says health minister Veena George.

Kerala tourism suffered a major jolt with the pandemic in the past year and a half. ‘God’s own country’ had maintained a steady annual growth of 10 per cent till 2019-20 with 18.4 million domestic tourists and 1.2 million foreign ones visiting the state that year. “We are designing strategies to attract domestic tourists. With a high number of vaccinations, the state is secure and ready to offer its best facilities now. We will keep our brand flying with more tourist-friendly initiatives,” says tourism minister Mohammed Riyas.

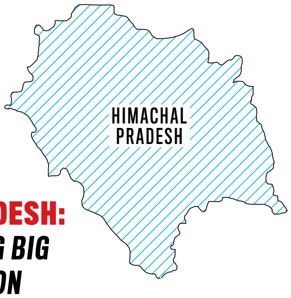
The 2018 mega floods and the unpredictable monsoons since have made the state realise the need to increase forest cover. Total area under forests, including plantations, is estimated to be 21,144 sq. km, an increase of 4 per cent in 2017-19. “While increasing the forest cover, we are also taking steps to keep the environment clean by monitoring the air pollution and reducing carbon emissions,” says forest minister A.K. Saseendran. ■

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES ENVIRONMENT

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
KERALA	◀▶ 1	1	1	1
KARNATAKA	▲ 2	3	4	3
CHHATTISGARH	◀▶ 2	2	7	10
TAMIL NADU	▲ 4	5	3	8
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼ 5	4	2	2
ODISHA	▲ 5	7	6	6
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼ 7	6	9	4
ASSAM	◀▶ 8	8	5	7
MADHYA PRADESH	◀▶ 9	9	8	11
GUJARAT	▲ 10	17	14	12
MAHARASHTRA	▲ 11	13	15	16
TELANGANA	◀▶ 12	12	11	5
WEST BENGAL	▲ 13	15	16	17
PUNJAB	◀▶ 14	14	12	14
JHARKHAND	▲ 15	16	10	15
RAJASTHAN	▲ 16	18	18	19
BIHAR	▲ 17	19	19	18
UTTARAKHAND	▼ 18	11	17	13
HARYANA	▼ 19	10	12	20
UTTAR PRADESH	◀▶ 20	20	20	21

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES TOURISM

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
KERALA	▲ 1	3	1	3
GUJARAT	◀▶ 2	2	2	13
ASSAM	▲ 3	13	16	7
MAHARASHTRA	▼ 4	1	5	4
RAJASTHAN	▼ 5	4	3	14
UTTARAKHAND	▲ 6	9	10	16
PUNJAB	▲ 7	12	7	17
ODISHA	▲ 8	16	18	20
BIHAR	▲ 9	15	17	19
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▲ 10	14	14	21
HARYANA	▲ 11	18	9	6
TAMIL NADU	▼ 12	6	4	1
MADHYA PRADESH	▼ 13	5	15	8
TELANGANA	▼ 14	10	8	5
WEST BENGAL	▼ 15	11	13	11
KARNATAKA	▼ 16	8	11	12
UTTAR PRADESH	▼ 17	7	6	2
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼ 18	17	12	9
JHARKHAND	◀▶ 19	19	19	18
CHHATTISGARH	◀▶ 20	20	20	10



HIMACHAL PRADESH: *BEST PERFORMING BIG STATE IN EDUCATION*

LESSONS FOR LIFE

Himachal has earmarked 16 per cent of its budget for education to ensure quality schooling reaches the farthest corners of the state

By Anilesh S. Mahajan

Himachal Pradesh, which currently has a literacy rate of nearly 88 per cent, is directing 16 per cent of its budget this fiscal (Rs 8,024 crore) to the education sector. "Every child born in the state should not only be healthy but also get access to good quality education so that by the time he joins the workforce, he is more than effective," says Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur. While Himachal was among the first states to achieve universal enrolment of children till Class 8, truancy is a major issue. In the past two years, internet access while students were attending classes from home came as a big stress. Himachal has been trying to open up schools since September, but has not been too successful because of a surge in Covid infections among students and children. Once schools open up completely, the state plans to aggressively tackle the truancy issues. Meanwhile, the bulk of spending will go on school projects to ensure the spread of education to the farthest corners as well as in improving quality of education. This includes construction of 15 new Atal Adarsh Vidya Kendras, where free education will be provided along with hostel facilities; 10 such schools are functional now. The state is also equipping all government schools with video conferencing facilities to ensure that the hybrid classroom becomes more of a reality. ■

ANI

SAFETY MEASURE Thermal screening of students at a school in Mandi

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES **EDUCATION**

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
HIMACHAL PRADESH	◂▸ **1**	1	1	1
KERALA	◂▸ **2**	2	2	2
UTTARAKHAND	◂▸ **3**	3	3	4
PUNJAB	▲ **4**	5	9	6
TAMIL NADU	▲ **5**	7	6	3
MAHARASHTRA	◂▸ **6**	6	7	7
KARNATAKA	▼ **7**	4	4	5
ASSAM	▲ **8**	10	5	12
HARYANA	▼ **9**	8	10	8
CHHATTISGARH	▼ **10**	9	8	9
GUJARAT	▲ **11**	13	16	14
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼ **12**	11	12	16
TELANGANA	▲ **13**	16	18	18
ODISHA	◂▸ **14**	14	12	13
WEST BENGAL	▼ **15**	12	11	17
MADHYA PRADESH	▲ **16**	17	17	15
RAJASTHAN	▲ **17**	18	15	11
UTTAR PRADESH	▲ **18**	19	19	19
JHARKHAND	▼ **19**	15	14	20
BIHAR	◂▸ **20**	20	20	21

GUJARAT: ***BEST PERFORMING BIG STATE IN LAW & ORDER***

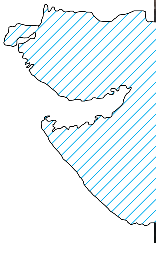
ETERNALLY VIGILANT

Gujarat has used technology, legislation and the best practices to curb crime

By Kiran D. Tare

SAM PANTHAKY/AFP

PANDEMIC SCARE
Health workers and police stop a car in Ahmedabad during the lockdown



In 2020, Gujarat topped the states and Union territories in filing of chargesheets, 97.1 per cent cases, according to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. The number of criminal cases registered increased to 381,000 from 139,000 in 2019, though around 227,000 cases were under IPC Section 188 (violation of notification issued by public servant), where people were booked for violating the norms of Covid lockdown. At 982, the number of murder cases shows a slight dip in 2020 from 993 in 2019.

Using state-of-the-art technology as well as human intelligence has yielded good results in cracking crimes. The Gujarat Goonda and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act 2020 and the Gujarat Land Grabbing Prohibition Act 2020 have proved to be important tools in improving the law and order situation. 'Operation Muskan', launched with the aim of tracing missing children, was also a huge success, with 95.2 per cent of the cases solved.

Equipped with body-worn cameras, laser guns and 15 drone cameras with night vision, the Gujarat Police now has a modern look. Initiatives such as VISWAS (Video Integration and State Wide Advanced Security) and Cyber AASHVAST (Assured Assistance Service Helpline for Victims) have helped curb crime effectively. ■

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES LAW & ORDER

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
GUJARAT	▲ 1	2	3	8
PUNJAB	▼ 2	1	2	5
TAMIL NADU	◀▶ 3	3	1	1
UTTAR PRADESH	▲ 4	8	10	13
KERALA	▲ 5	9	9	3
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼ 6	5	4	11
KARNATAKA	◀▶ 7	7	13	17
WEST BENGAL	▼ 8	4	5	9
UTTARAKHAND	▲ 9	13	6	7
BIHAR	▲ 10	12	8	2
MAHARASHTRA	▼ 11	10	14	16
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼ 12	6	7	6
TELANGANA	▼ 13	10	12	14
RAJASTHAN	◀▶ 14	14	15	12
MADHYA PRADESH	▲ 15	19	19	18
JHARKHAND	▼ 16	15	11	10
CHHATTISGARH	◀▶ 17	17	16	15
HARYANA	◀▶ 18	18	18	21
ODISHA	▼ 19	16	17	19
ASSAM	◀▶ 20	20	20	20

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES GOVERNANCE

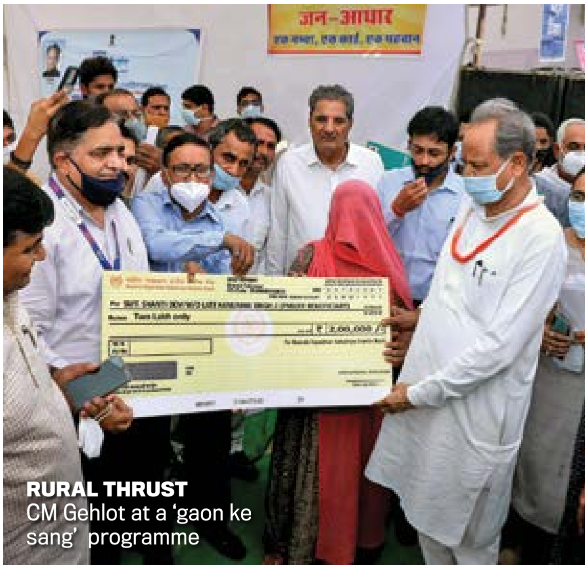
STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
RAJASTHAN	◀▶ 1	1	1	1
MAHARASHTRA	▲ 2	6	8	3
MADHYA PRADESH	▲ 3	5	3	5
WEST BENGAL	▲ 3	4	9	12
HARYANA	▲ 5	8	4	6
CHHATTISGARH	▼ 6	2	2	9
GUJARAT	▼ 7	3	5	2
TAMIL NADU	▲ 8	15	13	16
ANDHRA PRADESH	◀▶ 9	9	10	10
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼ 10	7	11	11
KERALA	◀▶ 11	11	12	7
UTTAR PRADESH	▲ 12	16	16	14
JHARKHAND	▲ 13	14	15	15
UTTARAKHAND	▼ 14	13	14	13
KARNATAKA	▼ 15	12	7	4
ASSAM	▲ 16	18	20	18
BIHAR	◀▶ 17	17	18	17
TELANGANA	▼ 18	10	6	8
ODISHA	▲ 19	20	17	19
PUNJAB	▼ 20	19	19	20

RAJASTHAN: ***BEST PERFORMING BIG STATE IN GOVERNANCE***

LAST MILE CONNECT

Strong panchayati raj institutions and a focus on empowering women have been game-changers for the desert state

By Rohit Parihar


जन-आधार
एक नम्बर, एक कार्ड, एक पहचान

RURAL THRUST
CM Gehlot at a 'gaon ke sang' programme

PURUSHOTTAM DIWAKAR

Rajasthan has been winning the best performing big state in governance award for some years now. A desert state with low income and the largest geographical area, the state government has focused on issues at the ground level like special reservation for women and 'e-mitra' to improve governance. The state now boasts that 56 per cent of all panchayat members are women and e-governance links all 11,341 panchayats. The state provides 500 services at its private e-mitra centres, with 18 centres available per one lakh people. This has drastically reduced the time and effort to get an official service done. Besides, the 87,166 kiosks that provide such services have generated many jobs.

However, the state still has much more to do in ease of doing business where it ranks No. 8 in the country and online transactions, which stand at a low 4,895 per thousand people. Gradually, a lot of payments, including electricity bills, fees for registration of vehicles and properties, issuance of licenses etc., are being done online.

Rajasthan also gives 50 per cent reservation to women in panchayati raj institutions. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot says, "The focus on devolution of powers to panchayati raj institutions made us take e-governance to the extreme corners of rural Rajasthan," he says.

However, the state continues to lag behind in parameters such as the slow response to the implementation of central and its own schemes. One reason for this is the inertia that plagues the bureaucratic and political system. ■

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
ANDHRA PRADESH	▲ 1	2	1	5
TAMIL NADU	▼ 2	1	2	3
WEST BENGAL	◀▶ 3	3	5	2
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▲ 4	5	6	7
CHHATTISGARH	▲ 5	6	4	1
ODISHA	▲ 6	7	10	9
TELANGANA	▼ 7	4	3	6
RAJASTHAN	▲ 8	13	16	16
ASSAM	▲ 9	10	13	18
KERALA	▼ 9	8	7	4
PUNJAB	▲ 11	12	11	11
MADHYA PRADESH	▼ 12	9	8	8
HARYANA	▼ 13	11	9	10
JHARKHAND	▲ 14	19	20	20
UTTARAKHAND	▼ 15	14	12	21
GUJARAT	◀▶ 16	16	17	12
BIHAR	▲ 17	18	15	17
MAHARASHTRA	▼ 18	17	19	19
UTTAR PRADESH	▲ 19	20	18	14
KARNATAKA	▼ 20	15	13	13

BACK TO CLASS CM Jagan Reddy at a Nadu-Nedu school refurbishing programme

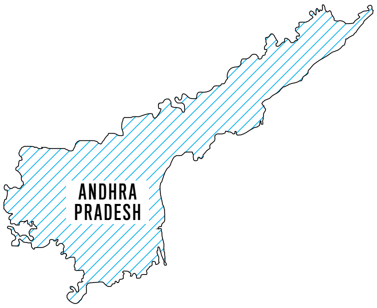
ANI

ANDHRA PRADESH: *BEST PERFORMING BIG STATE IN INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT*

SATURATION COVERAGE

Under Jagan Reddy, welfare-centric measures covering every disadvantaged group in society is the top priority

By Amarnath K. Menon



Under Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, welfare-centric measures with a human touch have overriding priority over every other endeavour in governance. The state boasts offtake of 114.7 per cent in 2020-21 through the public distribution system (PDS), surpassing all other states. The PDS offering is symptomatic of what the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress focuses on—a saturation concept offering a slew of all-encompassing welfare schemes targeting almost every disadvantaged group in society. Reddy's goal is a higher score on the human development index than other states by the time he completes his first term in May 2024.

Education, health and women's empowerment are among the key focus areas. The direct benefit transfer (DBT) schemes now have 37,206,852 beneficiaries with an investment of Rs 28,854 crore in 2021-22 so far.

Mothers play a pivotal role, especially in education initiatives. The Jagananna Ammavodi scheme for poor and needy mothers to educate their children from Class 1 to the Plus Two intermediate level, and the Jagananna Vidya Deevena (JVD), for them to pursue higher education, has money credited directly to the mother's account. ■

HARYANA: ***BEST PERFORMING BIG STATE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP***

ALWAYS OPENFOR BUSINESS

The Covid crisis hit its boomtown industries hard, but the state rose to the challenge admirably

By Anilesh S. Mahajan

POWERING AHEAD CM Khattar at a 'Har Hith' store scheme launch in Panchkula

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES ENTREPRENEURSHIP

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
HARYANA	◀▶ **1**	1	1	1
TELANGANA	▲ **2**	6	6	5
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼ **3**	2	5	4
UTTARAKHAND	◀▶ **4**	4	4	7
TAMIL NADU	▼ **5**	3	3	3
KARNATAKA	▼ **6**	5	2	2
MAHARASHTRA	▲ **7**	9	8	8
KERALA	▲ **8**	10	13	20
PUNJAB	▼ **9**	7	9	10
RAJASTHAN	▼ **10**	8	10	11
UTTAR PRADESH	▲ **11**	12	14	16
WEST BENGAL	▲ **12**	14	7	12
MADHYA PRADESH	▼ **13**	11	15	17
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼ **14**	12	10	6
GUJARAT	▲ **15**	16	12	14
ODISHA	▼ **16**	15	16	9
ASSAM	▲ **17**	19	19	19
JHARKHAND	▼ **18**	17	18	15
CHHATTISGARH	▼ **19**	18	17	13
BIHAR	◀▶ **20**	20	20	18

For years, Haryana's proximity to national capital Delhi counted as a huge advantage. The satellite towns to the capital, Faridabad and Gurugram, host sprawling towers housing the country headquarters to almost 300 Fortune 500 companies. But amid the pandemic and subsequent shutdowns, this almost became a huge headache for the state. Haryana had to loosen its purse strings to keep them and the auxiliary industries afloat. The state is also home to 216,115 MSMEs.

Haryana started the 'Vivaadon ka Samadhan' initiative to help end disputes with the businesses. It is also working out sector-specific policies to boost agribusiness and food processing, textiles, warehousing and logistics, pharmaceuticals and MSMEs. According to Union ministry of commerce and industry rankings, Haryana improved from No. 14 in 2015 to No. 3 in 2017-18 in the ease of doing business rankings but dropped again to No. 16 in 2019. Ministry data also shows that Haryana has 8.5 start-ups per lakh people, banks in the state extended Rs 25.9 lakh loans per thousand residents and 2,118 persons per lakh are trained under PMKVY. These factors have built confidence among entrepreneurs. The state passed a new law reserving 75 per cent of jobs with salaries less than Rs 50,000 per month in the private sector for locals. While this has created a furore, Chief Minister M.L. Khattar is confident it will blow over.■

SIKKIM: *BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATE IN ECONOMY*

HIGH ON GROWTH

In 2021, Sikkim's economy took the top spot among India's small states

By Romita Datta

When it comes to Sikkim's economic health, a single data point is enough to show that it is a powerhouse—according to the state government, Sikkim's per capita GSDP (gross state domestic product) is about Rs 4.86 lakh, roughly three times the national average. Sikkim is also one of the fastest-growing states in the country, with its GSDP expanding at a CAGR (combined annual growth rate) of 15.86 per cent between 2015 and 2020.

The state's recent economic development is partly a consequence of FDI inflows from the export of drug formulations and medical and scientific instruments. Sikkim is home to some 50-odd pharmaceutical companies—in this, the state government's policies, which include excise and income tax benefits as well as freight and capital investment subsidies for the sector, have proved to be a major draw. Estimates suggest the overall revenue for the sector is pegged to grow 20 per cent year on year. According to state industry secretary H.K. Sharma, apart from tourism—which accounts for a large chunk of the state's revenue—the rapidly growing pharma industry has proved a lifeline for downstream SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and a source of jobs.

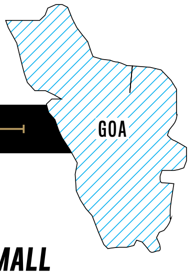
For long, Sikkim's economy had remained agriculture based. In recent years, the state has emerged as an industrial hub, with a focus on pharmaceuticals, ecotourism and food processing. To encourage the growth of start-ups and to boost employment among young people, the state government has also implemented a 'skilled youth start-up scheme', which facilitates bank loans up to Rs 20 lakh with a 35 per cent subsidy. For entrepreneurs from below the poverty line, the subsidy rises to 50 per cent. This financial assistance has proved a robust move to generate employment and contribute to the state economy. ■

PRASHANTH VISHWANATHAN/ GETTY IMAGES

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS The busy Mahatma Gandhi Road in Gangtok

▶ BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES ECONOMY

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
SIKKIM	▲ 1	2	2	3
DELHI	▲ 2	3	4	2
GOA	▼ 3	1	1	1
PUDUCHERRY	◀▶ 4	4	3	4
MIZORAM	◀▶ 5	5	5	5
MEGHALAYA	◀▶ 6	6	6	9
NAGALAND	▲ 7	8	8	10
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲ 8	9	7	6
MANIPUR	▲ 9	10	10	7
TRIPURA	▼ 10	7	9	8



GOA: ***BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATE IN INFRASTRUCTURE, EDUCATION, TOURISM & CLEANLINESS***

INFRA READY

Goa's steady infrastructure development has led to major knock-on benefits, resulting in high scores in a number of indices from education to cleanliness

By Kiran D. Tare

On November 1, when Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated a 7.32 km-long stretch of road between the villages of Loutolim and Verna, the travel distance between Ponda, one of Goa's biggest cities, and Mormugao, the state's major port, was reduced by 12 km, cutting travel time by half an hour. This is just one example of Goa's steady infrastructure development over the past couple of years.

With 17 km of road per 1,000 vehicles, Goa's road network is one of the best in India. Three years ago, the state also got a new cable-stayed bridge across the Mandovi river, which helped reduce traffic congestion near Panaji. Another cable-stayed bridge on the Zuari river is under construction—when completed, it will cut travel time between Panaji and Dabolim airport by half. On November 1, Gadkari announced that this bridge would have a viewing gallery, making it a tourist attraction.

The state also boasts other impressive infrastructure indices, such as 24 hour power supply to rural areas and piped drinking water in 98.5 per cent households. As a result of this infrastructure, it has also made significant strides in improving cleanliness,which in turn has helped reduce the incidence of water-borne disease transmission. The Panaji model of cleanliness has set a benchmark—the city's municipal corporation has a system to segregate dry, wet and reusable waste in the compounds of housing societies and also encourages them to produce fertiliser using their

BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES INFRASTRUCTURE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
GOA	◂▸ 1	1	1	2
DELHI	◂▸ 2	2	2	1
PUDUCHERRY	◂▸ 3	3	3	3
TRIPURA	◂▸ 4	4	4	4
NAGALAND	◂▸ 5	5	6	7
SIKKIM	▲ 6	7	5	5
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲ 7	10	10	10
MIZORAM	◂▸ 8	8	7	6
MANIPUR	▼ 9	6	8	8
MEGHALAYA	▼ 10	9	9	9

BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES EDUCATION

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
GOA	▲ 1	3	3	3
PUDUCHERRY	▼ 2	1	6	2
MIZORAM	▼ 3	2	2	4
SIKKIM	◂▸ 4	4	1	1
NAGALAND	▲ 5	8	4	7
MANIPUR	▼ 6	5	5	8
MEGHALAYA	▼ 7	6	8	6
TRIPURA	▼ 8	7	7	9
DELHI	▲ 9	10	10	10
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▼ 10	9	9	5

MANDAR DEODHAR

INFRA ARTERY
The cable-stayed bridge across the Mandovi river

BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES TOURISM

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
GOA	◄► **1**	1	1	1
SIKKIM	◄► **2**	2	2	2
NAGALAND	◄► **3**	3	3	4
MIZORAM	▲ **4**	9	6	9
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▼ **5**	4	5	3
MANIPUR	▲ **6**	8	7	8
MEGHALAYA	◄► **7**	7	8	10
PUDUCHERRY	▼ **8**	5	10	6
TRIPURA	◄► **9**	9	9	7
DELHI	▼ **10**	6	4	5

BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES CLEANLINESS

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
GOA	▲ **1**	2	1	5
SIKKIM	▼ **2**	1	4	1
PUDUCHERRY	▲ **3**	5	3	4
DELHI	◄► **4**	4	5	2
MIZORAM	▼ **5**	3	2	3
NAGALAND	◄► **6**	6	8	7
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	◄► **7**	7	7	6
TRIPURA	◄► **8**	8	6	8
MANIPUR	◄► **9**	9	9	10
MEGHALAYA	◄► **10**	10	10	9

waste, which is used in farming.

The state also produces 60 MW of energy from a waste treatment plant installed at Sankhali. Currently, about 70 per cent of the state's municipal waste is processed. Other related indices include the fact that almost 96 per cent of Goa's households use clean fuel for cooking. That the residents of the state are keen on maintaining cleanliness was evident in an incident in July, when the Haldona panchayat made former cricketer Ajay Jadeja pay a fine of Rs 5,000 for dumping his household garbage in a public space.

Goa's tourism sector is also getting back on track after the Covid-19 pandemic, with a focus on domestic travellers. The state operates 8.66 flights per 100,000 people every day. This level of connectivity has helped the tourism sector. State tourism minister Manohar Ajgaonkar also hopes that the Union government will allow international visitors to return to Goa at the earliest, since many countries have been easing travel restrictions after the pandemic.

Goa's impressive vaccination drive—with the state's entire eligible population having received at least one dose of the vaccine, and 85 per cent having received two doses—has also played a role in allowing the state government to reopen its tourism sector early. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant also says he is working towards making Goa a destination for medical and adventure tourism.

Goa's infrastructure has also allowed it to perform well when it comes to education. For instance, all of the state's public schools have separate toilets for female students—this has helped in reducing the dropout rate among these students. At Cujira, the state's educational hub near Panaji, schools are waiting to welcome students back—a state-level task force has recommended the reopening of schools for students between standards one and eight. Classes for students in higher standards and those studying in colleges have already resumed.

Chief Minister Sawant says the state will complete all major infrastructure projects on its slate over the next six months. "We have initiated [these] to strengthen tourism infrastructure," he says. "We will be at numero uno position in this sector too." On the matter of cleanliness, he says his government has successfully implemented several central schemes, such as those aimed at ending open defecation in villages and supplying piped water to all households. "We have insisted on cleaning the roads and beaches too." He says that the state's high literacy rate is an outcome of the government's consistent efforts to provide all possible assistance to educators—at 88.7 per cent literacy, Goa is one of the more highly literate states in the country. ■

TRIPURA: ***BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATE IN AGRICULTURE***

GROWING PROSPERITY

The state government's push for self sufficiency in food production has led to remarkable agricultural productivity and global exports

By Kaushik Deka

One example of Tripura's success in agriculture has to do with pineapples. According to the state horticulture department, pineapples are cultivated on about 8,800 hectares in the state, with some 4,000 farmers directly involved. Tripura produces three varieties—Kew, Queen and Bombay—of which Queen pineapples are considered the most exotic and are in great demand. This has put the state on the global map—since 2019, Tripura has been exporting Queen pineapples to the UAE and other countries in the Middle East.

This success is a result of the government's focus on agriculture in recent years. With 8.64 tonnes of crop produced per hectare, Tripura's agricultural productivity is the highest among small states, and the third highest among all states in India. Agriculture accounts for 41 per cent of the sector's GSVA (gross state value added) contribution to the GSDP (gross state domestic product).

NATURAL BOUNTY Farmers in Agartala

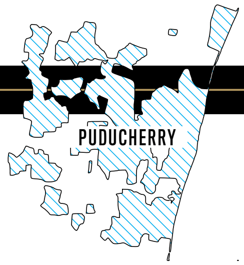
ABHISHEK SAHA

Chief Minister Biplab Deb credits this to his government's push for self-sufficiency in food, milk, fish and meat production. After coming to power in 2018, he introduced the Mukhyamantri Swanirbhar Parivar Yojana for rural development through agriculture, fish farming and animal rearing. Specific focus-driven policies, particularly for cash crops, have also been launched. For instance, the state has introduced Tripura AgarWood Policy 2021, which aims to plant 5 million agar saplings in the next five years. This is expected to generate Rs 2,000 crore in trade and also self-employment opportunities for young people. ■

▶ BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES AGRICULTURE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
TRIPURA	◂▸ 1	1	1	4
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲ 2	4	4	3
PUDUCHERRY	▲ 3	5	2	1
SIKKIM	▲ 4	6	6	7
NAGALAND	▼ 5	3	7	5
MEGHALAYA	▲ 6	7	9	9
MIZORAM	▲ 7	10	8	8
GOA	◂▸ 8	8	5	6
MANIPUR	◂▸ 9	9	10	10

Note: Delhi was not considered in the Agriculture category in 2021



PUDUCHERRY: ***BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATE IN HEALTH***

HEALTH IS WEALTH

The state's long-running focus on healthcare has ensured it retains the top spot in this category

By Amarnath K. Menon

JAISON G

PUBLIC GOOD
The dialysis unit at Indira Gandhi hospital in Puducherry

BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES HEALTH

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
PUDUCHERRY	◂▸ 1	1	1	1
DELHI	▲ 2	4	3	2
GOA	▼ 3	2	2	3
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲ 4	10	10	6
SIKKIM	▼ 5	3	4	5
TRIPURA	▲ 6	8	9	10
MIZORAM	▼ 7	5	6	8
MANIPUR	▼ 8	6	8	7
MEGHALAYA	◂▸ 9	9	5	4
NAGALAND	▼ 10	7	7	9

With 71 registered government allopathic doctors for every 100,000 residents—more than in any other state or Union Territory in India—Puducherry has a durable healthcare network. All considered, the state spends Rs 3,354 on healthcare per person, next only to Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Sikkim and Mizoram, and has 108 beds per government hospital, higher than in any other state or Union Territory except Delhi, which has 254. This ensures a dependable disease management system and a reliable supply of medicines—a rarity in India's public health system.

Puducherry's success is partly due to its small population—with 1.24 million people, the state has a population density of just 2,598 persons per sq. km, while Delhi's is 11,297 per sq. km. As a consequence, the state's performance on most health indices surpasses that of India as a whole. For instance, its infant mortality rate is 11 per 1,000 live births while India's average is 28. Significantly, almost all births take place in health institutions and 91.3 per cent of children are immunised, as against the all India average of 78.4 institutional births and 62 per cent child immunisation.

For long, Puducherry's administration has prioritised healthcare by, among other steps, spending more per capita on health than other, richer states, by setting up adequate numbers of medical colleges and ensuring that no positions are left vacant in its health administration. The state's focus on healthcare is clearly visible in its budgetary spending: the Union Territory spends 1.85 per cent of its GSDP (gross state domestic product) on health, compared with 0.86 per cent in Delhi and 0.74 per cent by most major states, according to the National Health Profile, 2017. Similarly, its per capita health spending rose to Rs 3,653 by 2019-20, higher than Delhi's Rs 3,145 and far higher than major states. The all-India average was Rs 1,765 which is less than the cost of a single Covid-19 test. ■

AP/ YIRMIYAN ARTHUR

WELL PROTECTED Nagaland police personnel in Kohima

NAGALAND: *BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATE IN LAW & ORDER*

SAFETY FIRST

Nagaland's continued excellence in law enforcement has resulted in the lowest crime rate in the country

By Kaushik Deka

BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES LAW AND ORDER

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
NAGALAND	◂▸ 1	1	1	1
MANIPUR	◂▸ 2	2	3	4
MIZORAM	◂▸ 3	3	2	2
SIKKIM	◂▸ 4	4	6	3
MEGHALAYA	◂▸ 5	5	8	6
GOA	▲ 6	7	7	10
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲ 7	9	9	7
PUDUCHERRY	▼ 8	5	4	5
TRIPURA	▼ 9	8	5	8
DELHI	◂▸ 10	10	10	9

Earlier this year, the 87-year-old Kohima North police station in Nagaland became the first police station/ government facility in the northeastern region to receive an ISO (International Organization for Standardisation) 9001 certification for its quality management system. Located in the heart of the state capital, the station, manned by an inspector-rank officer and 88 police personnel, reflects the innovation and improvement seen in policing in the state, which is often in the limelight for insurgency-related activities.

In fact, the state's policing records are impressive overall. According to the NCRB's (National Crime Records Bureau's) 2020 report, Nagaland's crime rate, at 46 incidents per 100,000 people, is the lowest among all states in the country (the national average is 314.3). The murder rate is just one per 100,000 people, the lowest in the country. The state recorded four cases of rape in 2020 and no cases of rioting, the lowest figures in both these categories.

The Nagaland government is now pushing to further reduce crimes against women and children, to decrease the number of murders and to curb cases of corruption by 2030, by strengthening the machinery of law enforcement, improving the participation of women in dispensing justice and extending schemes like 'Police ki Pathshala' in higher secondary level educational institutes—an outreach programme to improve connections between the police and student communities. To improve the state's technical capacities to fight cybercrime, a Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children Lab-cum-Training Centre has been set up, and Cyber Cells have been established in all the state's districts. Nagaland Police anti-extortion cells have also been set up in all the state's districts to tackle the menace of extortion. ■

OFFICIAL OUTREACH
CM N. Biren Singh at Maram Khullen village, Senapati

ANI

MANIPUR: *BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATE IN GOVERNANCE*

FOR THE PEOPLE

The state's push to increase both coverage and efficiency of government service delivery puts it at the head of the pack

By Kaushik Deka

BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES GOVERNANCE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MANIPUR	▲ 1	3	8	3
DELHI	▼ 2	1	1	4
PUDUCHERRY	▲ 3	6	5	8
SIKKIM	▼ 4	2	2	5
MIZORAM	▼ 5	4	4	2
TRIPURA	▲ 6	7	6	6
GOA	▼ 7	5	3	1
NAGALAND	◀▶ 8	8	7	7
MEGHALAYA	◀▶ 9	9	9	9
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	◀▶ 10	10	10	10

In the first week of November, Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh launched a public service delivery programme—'Go to Village 2.0'—in the state's Thoubal district. The objective of this programme is not just to take service delivery to people's doorsteps but to make it more efficient as well. According to Singh, under this scheme, public service delivery camps will be organised in all the state's 16 districts, covering Manipur's 451,000 households in 50 days. The project will facilitate the delivery of benefits under various central and state level schemes, including PM-GKAY (the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana), PM-UY (the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana), the CM e-Support Scheme, MIDH (the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture), EDP, Startup Manipur, PM-JAY (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana) and CMHT (the Chief Minister-gi Hakshelgi Tengbang).

Such projects reflect the state's improvement across all parameters considered to evaluate its performance in governance. For instance, with 100 per cent of Manipur's gram panchayats now providing e-services, the state is one of the best performing across the country. For every 100,000 individuals, there are 29 operational Common Service Centres, the highest figure among all small states. The state government has rolled out 35 e-services, the second highest in the northeastern region and the fourth highest among all states. In terms of women's participation, the state has done exceptionally well—more than 50 per cent of representatives in panchayats are women, the highest among all small states. ■

MIZORAM: ***BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATE IN INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT***

BREATHE EASY

Mizoram has retained its top rank in inclusive development and taken the lead in environment

By Kaushik Deka

SERENE SIGHTS
An aerial view of Aizawl, Mizoram

ALAMY

▶ BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MIZORAM	◀▶ 1	1	1	1
GOA	▲ 2	6	7	6
MANIPUR	▲ 3	4	2	4
PUDUCHERRY	▼ 4	3	4	2
DELHI	▲ 5	7	5	8
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲ 6	9	9	10
MEGHALAYA	▼ 7	5	6	5
TRIPURA	▼ 8	2	2	3
NAGALAND	▲ 9	10	10	9
SIKKIM	▼ 10	8	8	7

▶ BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES ENVIRONMENT

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MIZORAM	▲ 1	2	1	1
MEGHALAYA	▼ 2	1	2	6
PUDUCHERRY	◀▶ 3	3	7	8
NAGALAND	▲ 4	5	6	3
GOA	▼ 5	4	3	2
SIKKIM	◀▶ 6	6	7	9
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲ 7	8	5	7
TRIPURA	▲ 8	9	9	4
MANIPUR	▼ 9	7	4	5
DELHI	◀▶ 10	10	10	10

While Mizoram may be among the bottom ranked states in terms of per capita income, it has done well in keeping the share of its population below the poverty line under 12 per cent. Inclusive participation in the formal economy has been growing in recent times too—for every 1,000 people, 260 accounts have been opened under the Jan Dhan Yojana, the second highest among small states after Manipur. In terms of the ratio of domestic LPG and PNG consumers to total households, Mizoram, at 1.28, stands third among small states, following Delhi and Goa. It has done well on other indices as well—over 46 per cent of its households have at least one member covered by a health scheme, the third highest among small states. Only eight per cent of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18, the second lowest among small states. And under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, 2,472 of every 100,000 people aged between 15 and 29 got placements, the third highest among small states. With an average daily wage of Rs 225 per person, the state had the third highest wage rate among small states.

Though the state lost over 5.8 per cent of its forest cover between 2011 and 2019, it still has the highest forest cover to total geographical area—85 per cent. In terms of air pollutants—SO_2 concentration, NO_2 concentration and PM 10 concentration—the state has the lowest numbers among small states. ■

DELHI: ***BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP***

HUB OF STARTUPS

The development of a supporting ecosystem has led to a plethora of startups being founded in the national capital

By Shwweta Punj

ANI

BUSINESS FRIENDLY
Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia with students and teachers from government schools

BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES ENTREPRENEURSHIP

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
DELHI	◀▶ 1	1	2	1
PUDUCHERRY	◀▶ 2	2	1	2
GOA	◀▶ 3	3	3	3
MANIPUR	▲ 4	5	8	10
TRIPURA	▼ 5	4	4	4
MIZORAM	▲ 6	8	7	6
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	◀▶ 7	7	10	8
SIKKIM	▼ 8	6	6	5
NAGALAND	▲ 9	10	5	7
MEGHALAYA	▼ 10	9	9	9

In recent years, Delhi-NCR has earned a reputation as a hub for entrepreneurship and startups. Home to unicorns like Paytm, Zomato, MakeMyTrip and Naukri.com, the national capital region was home to ten unicorns as of the first half of 2019—with at least one added each year since 2013—compared with nine in Bengaluru and two in Mumbai, according to a report by TiE Delhi-NCR and consulting firm Zinnov. The cumulative market valuation of Delhi-NCR's startups is in the region of $46-56 billion (Rs 3.4-4.1 lakh crore). According to the report, since 2009, around 7,000 startups have been founded in Delhi-NCR; in comparison, Bengaluru saw 5,234 and Mumbai, 3,829.

The pace at which startups are being established in Delhi-NCR has accelerated in recent years thanks to the development of a supporting ecosystem, including access to capital and business incubators, and the availability of technical talent and co-working spaces. The Delhi government has also focused on improving the ease of doing business, with a startup policy for sectors like artificial intelligence, robotics and data analytics. According to government data, in 2020, Delhi had 27.2 startups per 100,000 people. In terms of talent availability, the Centre's skill development schemes have helped—as of 2021, Delhi had 2,335 workers per 100,000 people trained under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

The state government has also worked on easing regulatory compliances, like clearing permits for construction within two months and facilitating online registration of businesses. The state had identified 596 services to streamline, including trade licensing, online registration of businesses and doorstep delivery of documents. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, addressing an entrepreneur summit in December 2020, had said that as part of the state's startup policy, Delhi would provide collateral-free loans and set up a dedicated helpline for startups. In 2020, 109 startups were founded between January and June.

Delhi is in the race to become the Silicon Valley of India. Whether it will be able to sustain its current momentum depends on the government's ability to resolve basic infrastructure and liveability issues—like air quality—which could emerge as a sore point for those who might otherwise consider establishing their startups here. Delhi is also setting up a skills and entrepreneurship university and a high-tech business park at Rani Khera, about 15 minutes from the Delhi International Airport. ■

TO THE ONES WHO CREATE SMOKE AND THOSE WHO SUFFER IT

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INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC NEWSROOM

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES

BIHAR: ***MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN ECONOMY, EDUCATION AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT***

AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL

Bihar has kept the focus on social development intact while pursuing its economic goals

By Amitabh Srivastava

It is not very often that a state traditionally known as economically backward appears right at the top of three categories. Being adjudged the most improved state in economy, inclusive development and education reflects Bihar's rapid strides towards all-round development.

A key data that will be music to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's ears is the state's gender parity index of 1.05, which means more girls are enrolled in school than boys. It indicates progress not only in education but inclusive development as well. Girls have outnumbered boys in enrolment for classes 6 to 10. To cite one example, in 2019, 3.33 million girls were enrolled in classes 6 to 8 in government schools as against 3.21 million boys.

The number of girls taking the class 10 board examinations rose from 180,000 in 2005 to 822,000 in 2019. The state has also seen a substantial increase in allocation for the education sector. The total expenditure on education increased by 58.3 per cent between 2014-15 (Rs 17,833 crore) and 2019-20 (Rs 28,234 crore).

One of the parameters for inclusive development in the India Today State of the

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES EDUCATION

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
BIHAR	▲1	16	3	1
CHHATTISGARH	▲2	9	8	7
GUJARAT	▲3	6	13	15
RAJASTHAN	▲4	19	6	2
TELANGANA	▼5	4	9	18
PUNJAB	▲6	7	17	18
WEST BENGAL	▼7	1	2	9
JHARKHAND	▼8	2	1	4
MADHYA PRADESH	▲9	11	12	6
MAHARASHTRA	▲10	14	19	21
KARNATAKA	▲11	18	18	5
ODISHA	▲12	20	14	11
KERALA	▼13	10	16	17
UTTAR PRADESH	▼14	13	5	3
ASSAM	▼15	5	4	8
UTTARAKHAND	▼16	12	10	12
HARYANA	▼17	15	15	13
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼18	2	11	16
TAMIL NADU	▼19	8	20	20
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼20	17	7	14

SANTOSH KUMAR/GETTY IMAGES

SPOILT FOR CHOICE
A Big Bazaar mart in Patna

States (SoS) survey was 'PDS offtake'. In Bihar's case, it was a high 93.84 per cent in 2020-21. This is all the more praiseworthy because the Nitish government delivered more than 2.3 million ration cards to the poor during the pandemic and lockdowns in 2020. It added over 10 million people to the government's free ration scheme.

Bihar, with just 2.9 per cent of the country's land area, is home to about 9 per cent of India's population, which means more pressure on resources. While facing many economic challenges, the state has consistently remained revenue surplus—Rs 6,897 crore in 2018-19, according to the Bihar Economic survey 2020-21. What matters most is that Bihar has been notching double-digit growth numbers despite the challenges of the pandemic in the past two years. According to the Bihar Economic Survey 2020-21, the state's growth rate for FY2019-20 was 10.5 per cent—much higher than that of the national economy. ■

▶ MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES ECONOMY

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
BIHAR	▲1	9	7	2
ASSAM	▲2	3	1	1
TELANGANA	▼3	2	3	5
WEST BENGAL	▲4	12	12	15
MADHYA PRADESH	▲5	13	8	4
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼6	1	2	11
GUJARAT	▼7	5	11	12
ODISHA	▼8	7	13	21
HARYANA	▼9	4	6	6
TAMIL NADU	▼10	8	14	8
KARNATAKA	▼11	6	5	9
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼12	10	4	13
CHHATTISGARH	▲13	15	10	3
JHARKHAND	▲14	19	20	19
MAHARASHTRA	▲15	16	9	7
KERALA	▼16	11	17	16
PUNJAB	◀▶17	17	16	18
UTTAR PRADESH	◀▶18	18	15	10
RAJASTHAN	▼19	14	18	17
UTTARAKHAND	◀▶20	20	19	14

▶ MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
BIHAR	▲1	1	4	8
WEST BENGAL	▲2	4	2	3
ODISHA	▲3	5	5	4
MADHYA PRADESH	▼4	2	6	7
GUJARAT	▼5	3	8	5
ASSAM	◀▶6	6	11	9
RAJASTHAN	▲7	10	12	11
JHARKHAND	▲8	16	14	17
CHHATTISGARH	▼9	8	1	2
UTTAR PRADESH	▼10	7	3	1
PUNJAB	◀▶11	11	13	16
HARYANA	▲12	13	9	12
TAMIL NADU	▲13	15	18	19
TELANGANA	▲14	17	15	18
MAHARASHTRA	▼15	14	10	12
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼16	9	16	15
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼17	12	7	10
KARNATAKA	◀▶18	18	17	14
KERALA	◀▶19	19	20	21
UTTARAKHAND	◀▶20	20	19	20

JHARKHAND: MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN INFRASTRUCTURE

HITTING THE FAST LANE

The state is investing heavily on road and rail infrastructure and towards making its cities more livable

By Amitabh Srivastava

For Jharkhand, known for its natural beauty and gifted with almost 40 per cent of India's mineral reserves, infrastructure was perhaps the only area where the state needed a push. And the Hemant Soren government is rightly credited for doing that. According to the Jharkhand Economic Survey 2020-21, the length of national highways in the state grew by 27 per cent between 2018 and 2020, from 2,649 km to 3,367 km; and that of state roads by about 9 per cent, from 11,709 km to 12,736 km. In additional thrust to infrastructure, electrification of railway tracks has been sanctioned across the state.

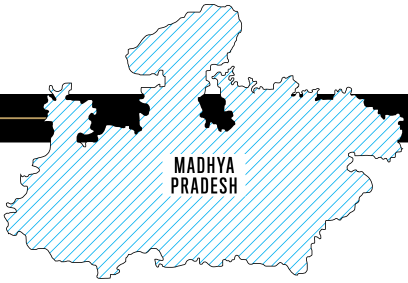
To ramp up urban infrastructure, Jharkhand, in 2019, secured loans worth $147 million (Rs 1,095 crore) from the World Bank for its Municipal Development Project. The programme focuses on augmenting civic bodies' capacity to provide basic urban services, such as drinking water, sewerage and roads. "Holistic socio-economic development of a state depends on striking the right balance between a welfare approach and a strong focus on building sustainable capital infrastructure and public assets. Jharkhand is marching ahead on this path," says Chief Minister Hemant Soren. ■

SMOOTH RUN
Road network in Patratu Valley

SOMNATH SEN

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES INFRASTRUCTURE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
JHARKHAND	◂▸ 1	1	4	1
BIHAR	▲ 2	5	7	4
MADHYA PRADESH	◂▸ 3	3	1	6
TELANGANA	▲ 4	8	3	8
RAJASTHAN	▲ 5	11	11	13
UTTARAKHAND	▲ 6	16	16	10
ODISHA	▼ 7	2	9	7
CHHATTISGARH	▼ 8	5	2	5
ANDHRA PRADESH	▲ 9	10	17	19
ASSAM	▼ 10	4	5	2
HARYANA	▼ 11	7	13	11
MAHARASHTRA	◂▸ 12	12	6	14
UTTAR PRADESH	▲ 13	17	8	9
GUJARAT	▲ 14	19	18	21
PUNJAB	◂▸ 15	15	10	20
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼ 16	14	15	17
TAMIL NADU	▲ 17	20	19	12
KARNATAKA	▼ 18	9	14	16
KERALA	▼ 19	13	12	15
WEST BENGAL	▼ 20	18	20	18



MADHYA PRADESH: *MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN AGRICULTURE*

A Fresh Approach to Farming

Going beyond agri production, MP is adopting modern techniques to boost farm incomes and bring the mandi closer to growers

By Rahul Noronha

Agriculture in Madhya Pradesh has witnessed a remarkable turnaround. From negative growth over 15 years ago, the sector has been achieving over 10 per cent growth over the past decade; some years, it was more than 20 per cent. Agriculture's contribution to the state's Gross Value Added (GVA) jumped from 33.85 per cent in 2011-12 to 46.98 per cent in 2020-21.

Till 2018, the focus was on improving production of agricultural commodities. This was accomplished through bonuses and MSP procurements. Efforts are now being made to maximise farm incomes by adding to the value chain. Consultancies hired for value chain analysis of seven prominent crops have suggested various interventions.

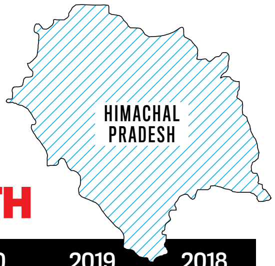
The marketing strategy has undergone changes too. Last year, the state began procurement at the farm gate level, enabling farmers to sell their produce without visiting mandis. The entire marketing operation is online; apps provide farmers real-time information on crop prices. Subsidies on farm implements have also been amended. Tractors are off the list. "Our study found around 86,000 tractors are sold in MP every year. Instead of tractors, subsidies are being offered on modern equipment such as happy seeders and mulchers," says Ajit Kesri, additional chief secretary, agriculture, MP. ■

▶ MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES AGRICULTURE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MADHYA PRADESH	◂▸1	1	1	1
TELANGANA	▲2	13	17	21
HARYANA	▲3	8	15	13
RAJASTHAN	▲4	9	7	5
MAHARASHTRA	▲5	11	10	19
ASSAM	▼6	3	3	2
BIHAR	▲7	15	16	15
UTTAR PRADESH	▲8	12	8	6
CHHATTISGARH	▼9	2	4	4
GUJARAT	▼10	7	5	14
WEST BENGAL	▼11	6	12	17
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼12	5	6	9
JHARKHAND	▼13	4	2	7
TAMIL NADU	▲14	19	18	18
PUNJAB	▲15	16	14	12
ODISHA	▼16	14	9	11
KARNATAKA	▲17	18	11	8
UTTARAKHAND	▲18	20	19	16
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼19	10	13	10
KERALA	▼20	17	20	20

MAN AND MACHINE Wheat harvesting during the Covid lockdown in Bhopal

PANKAJ TIWARI



MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES HEALTH

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▲1	14	12	11
ANDHRA PRADESH	▲2	9	1	2
GUJARAT	▲3	4	6	7
TAMIL NADU	▲4	11	18	12
JHARKHAND	▼5	2	8	8
ASSAM	▼6	5	5	1
HARYANA	▲7	12	10	9
UTTAR PRADESH	▼8	6	4	5
UTTARAKHAND	▲9	13	3	4
ODISHA	▼10	1	11	13
KARNATAKA	▼11	10	14	14
TELANGANA	▼12	7	2	3
MAHARASHTRA	▼13	3	7	6
BIHAR	▲14	18	9	16
WEST BENGAL	▲15	19	16	21
MADHYA PRADESH	▼16	8	17	15
KERALA	▲16	20	13	18
PUNJAB	▼18	17	15	17
RAJASTHAN	▼19	15	20	19
CHHATTISGARH	▼20	16	19	20

HIMACHAL PRADESH: *MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN HEALTH*

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

The hill state did not let the difficulties of terrain hamper its Covid treatment strategy and vaccination drive

By Anilesh S. Mahajan

MODEL CARE
At the Integrated Muscular Dystrophy Rehabilitation Centre, Solan

In August, Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur earned praise for his state completing the first dose of Covid vaccination for all eligible citizens. The state has so far administered the second dose to over 85 per cent of its people. The pandemic has seen the state not only augment its healthcare facilities but also extend treatment to Covid patients from other states.

Successive governments in the state have invested in extending healthcare to the remote regions. In 2019, the Thakur government introduced bike and air ambulances for the rural and inaccessible areas, the cost being borne by the administration. This came in handy while shifting Covid patients for treatment and transporting vaccines.

In 2018-19, Himachal had 35 doctors for every 100,000 people, up from 22 in 2016-17. To improve the ratio, the government decided to treat ayurveda physicians on par with allopaths and hired 259 ayurveda doctors in 2019.

The state has a medical college for every two districts and a government hospital for every 10,000 residents. It is working on a policy to make it compulsory for medical graduates to work five years in the state before moving out.

In January 2019, the Thakur government launched the Mukhyamantri Himachal Health Care Scheme (HIMCARE), bringing 513,000 families under its cover by November this year. The scheme covers cashless treatment in 222 hospitals, including 85 private ones.

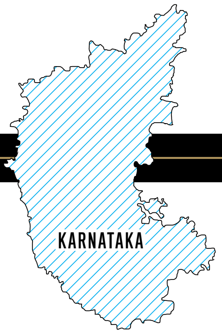
The Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram has significantly boosted health outcomes. It caters to the needs of pregnant women till delivery and provides for free check-ups, medicines and, if needed, surgery for newborns. ■

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES LAW & ORDER

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
KARNATAKA	▲1	3	14	15
UTTAR PRADESH	▲1	14	18	19
GUJARAT	▲3	11	15	16
WEST BENGAL	▼4	1	2	2
KERALA	▲5	10	3	4
MADHYA PRADESH	▼6	4	12	13
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼7	2	4	5
PUNJAB	▲8	13	10	11
MAHARASHTRA	▲9	16	16	17
ASSAM	▲10	15	6	7
CHHATTISGARH	▲11	12	11	12
HARYANA	▲12	18	20	21
TELANGANA	▼13	7	5	6
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼14	6	7	8
TAMIL NADU	▼15	5	1	1
RAJASTHAN	▼16	9	17	18
UTTARAKHAND	▲17	20	19	20
ODISHA	▼18	17	8	9
BIHAR	▼19	8	9	10
JHARKHAND	▼20	19	13	14

GUARD UP
Police checking vehicles in Bengaluru

MANJUNATH KIRAN/AFP



KARNATAKA: ***MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN LAW & ORDER***

A Hard Stop on Crime

The police have kept heinous offences in check and maintained a people-friendly image

By Aravind Gowda

Karnataka has scored well on several parameters to emerge as the most improved big state in law and order. For instance, in 2020, the number of murders was low at 2 per 100,000 people while one rape and three kidnappings were reported. The state has been effectively tackling the problem of molestation—seven incidences for every 100,000 people last year.

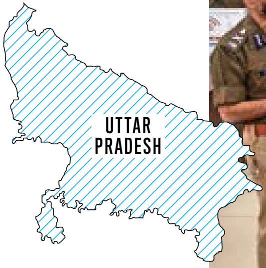
The government has made policing impactful, especially in the cities and towns, by strengthening night patrolling and adopting technology. Riots have been curbed through interventional strategies at the local level. Seven cases of riots per 100,000 people were reported in 2020.

The number of police personnel for every 100,000 people stood at 83, among the highest for big states. The government has introduced several initiatives to make policing people-centric. The number of pending cases is down to 32 per thousand people in 2021. Police stations in Bengaluru have special representatives for better engagement with the public.

Infrastructure at police stations has been upgraded through public-private partnership. In Bengaluru, over 7,500 CCTV cameras have been installed at key locations to curb crime. 'Quick response' vehicles have been deployed on the streets. The measures helped bring down chain-snatchings significantly last year. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has warned the police against any nexus with the land mafia, which dominated Bengaluru for years. ■

UTTAR PRADESH: ***MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN LAW & ORDER AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP***

Break from the Past



The government's zero tolerance for crime has not only reduced cases but also helped create a pro-investment environment

By Ashish Misra

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath declared in 2017 that criminals will have to give up crime or leave the state. The police got cracking soon after, preparing a list of notorious criminals in each district and forming special teams to nab them. The results have been impressive. In the past four and a half years, 137 criminals have been killed in police encounters. Close to 37,000 arrests have been made under the UP Gangster Act and 523 under the National Security Act. "Zero tolerance for crime has led to the arrest of 11,000 prized criminals," says UP additional chief secretary (home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi.

According to the State Crime Records Bureau, between 2016 and 2020, cases of murder fell by 25.7 per cent, of dacoity by 67 per cent and of kidnappings for ransom by 41 per cent. Rape cases dropped 32 per cent.

The improvement in law and order has spurred entrepreneurship and investment. "Seven companies from Japan, five from the US, four each from Germany and South Korea, three from UK, two each from Canada and Singapore, and one from Hong Kong are investing in the state," says additional chief secretary (MSME) Navneet Sehgal. UP stood second in the 2019 rankings (released by DPIIT) of states based on their implementation of the Business Reform Action Plan—a jump of 12 positions over three years. ■

KEEPING TABS
ADG (law and order) Prashant Kumar (centre) at the social media wing of the police HQ in Lucknow

MANEESH AGNIHOTRI

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
UTTAR PRADESH	◂▸ 1	1	3	3
UTTARAKHAND	◂▸ 2	2	10	10
ASSAM	▲ 3	4	6	15
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▲ 4	6	9	7
MADHYA PRADESH	▲ 5	9	20	20
BIHAR	▲ 6	8	2	2
TELANGANA	▼ 7	5	15	12
HARYANA	▼ 8	7	1	6
KERALA	▲ 9	10	4	8
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼ 10	3	11	4
RAJASTHAN	▲ 11	16	16	19
PUNJAB	▲ 12	17	19	21
CHHATTISGARH	▲ 13	18	12	14
WEST BENGAL	▼ 14	11	14	18
JHARKHAND	▼ 15	12	5	5
ODISHA	▼ 16	15	18	17
TAMIL NADU	▼ 17	14	8	11
MAHARASHTRA	▲ 18	19	13	13
KARNATAKA	▼ 19	13	7	1
GUJARAT	◂▸ 20	20	17	16

WEST
BENGAL

WEST BENGAL:
MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN GOVERNANCE

DELIVERY AT DOORSTEP

Digitisation of services at the grassroots and award-winning welfare schemes have changed the face of governance in the state

By Romita Datta

FOR THE PEOPLE
The Mamata government's Swasthya Saathi health insurance card

ANI

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES GOVERNANCE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
WEST BENGAL	▲ 1	2	2	3
PUNJAB	▲ 2	11	11	11
MAHARASHTRA	▲ 3	5	17	18
ASSAM	▼ 4	1	4	5
TAMIL NADU	▲ 5	12	15	16
HARYANA	▼ 6	3	18	19
BIHAR	▼ 7	4	5	8
GUJARAT	▲ 8	10	20	21
KARNATAKA	▼ 9	8	6	7
KERALA	▲ 10	13	8	12
UTTARAKHAND	▼ 11	6	16	17
ODISHA	▼ 12	9	7	9
RAJASTHAN	▼ 13	7	12	13
JHARKHAND	◀▶ 14	14	10	15
TELANGANA	▲ 15	20	1	1
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼ 16	15	13	10
UTTAR PRADESH	▲ 17	18	9	6
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼ 18	17	3	4
MADHYA PRADESH	◀▶ 19	19	19	20
CHHATTISGARH	▼ 20	16	14	14

West Bengal was ranked ninth by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion in 'ease of doing business' in 2019, but the state had begun making forays into e-governance way back in 2012. Digitisation of work has been completed in 238 of the 341 blocks. Be it land records, trade licences, building plans or welfare schemes, the delivery of government services at the municipal and panchayat levels has become simpler, faster and paperless.

The achievements in governance won West Bengal five SKOCH Awards in 2021. Four of them, including the top two honours, were bagged by the MSME department for 'Shilpa Sathi', the single-window system that integrates clearances required from multiple departments for setting up businesses.

West Bengal is one of the few states to have taken the lead in ensuring women's participation in governance by reserving 50 per cent of seats in panchayats and civic bodies. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's cabinet has 10 women, with some holding key portfolios.

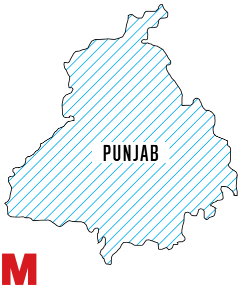
With 'Duare Sarkar', unveiled last December, the government has sought to identify legitimate beneficiaries and offer 11 social welfare schemes/ services at their doorstep. Among them are the global award-winning 'Kanyashree (stipend for higher education of girls)' and 'Sabooj Sathi (free bicycles for schoolgirls)'. ■

PUNJAB: *MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN TOURISM*

Ready for Rush Hour

Punjab is eagerly awaiting foreign and domestic tourist footfalls to end the lean phase of the pandemic

By Anilesh S. Mahajan



MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES TOURISM

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
PUNJAB	▲1	2	5	14
ANDHRA PRADESH	▼2	1	1	1
KERALA	▲3	9	14	17
UTTAR PRADESH	▲4	5	3	2
BIHAR	▼5	4	4	16
ODISHA	▲6	10	15	11
JHARKHAND	▲7	17	6	6
GUJARAT	▼8	3	2	3
WEST BENGAL	▲9	14	7	4
RAJASTHAN	▼10	7	8	7
MAHARASHTRA	▲11	16	16	9
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▲12	15	18	18
TAMIL NADU	▲13	18	20	19
UTTARAKHAND	▼14	11	10	21
CHHATTISGARH	▼15	6	12	13
KARNATAKA	▲16	20	13	15
TELANGANA	▼17	8	9	5
ASSAM	▼18	12	19	20
HARYANA	▼19	13	11	8
MADHYA PRADESH	▼20	19	17	10

HERITAGE CITY Amritsar is packed with places of tourist interest

PRABHJOT GILL

The pandemic wiped out almost two years of travel but economies globally are gradually opening up. Punjab too is eagerly waiting for its diaspora to come visiting to pay obeisance at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Takht Sri Damdama Sahib in Talwandi Sabo and Kesgarh Sahib in Anandpur Sahib—three of the holiest seats of Sikhism.

In the past two years, the state government has refurbished the *galiyara* around the Golden Temple and the Virasat-e-Khalsa museum in Anandpur Sahib, and recently inaugurated a theme park at Chamkaur Sahib, known as the place of martyrdom of the two elder sons of Guru Gobind Singh.

Punjab, home to places of religious significance, forts and palaces, archaeological and heritage sites, and wetlands, attracted 47.3 million domestic and 1.1 million foreign tourists in 2019, as per Union tourism ministry data. The numbers dipped drastically as the world went indoors following the outbreak of Covid.

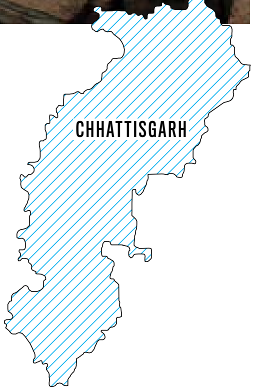
The state government and industry watchers are hopeful that just like domestic travellers, international tourists will also start flocking in. The state has two international airports, at Amritsar and Chandigarh, whereas Pathankot, Adampur, Ludhiana and Bathinda feature on the domestic aviation circuit.

Successive governments have invested on the development of religious tourism. The state has a good network of quality hotels and places to eat, which has helped the wedding industry thrive. Hundreds of NRIs visit Punjab every year to hold or attend lavish weddings.

The government is spending over Rs 50 crore on tourist infrastructure around wetlands and other water bodies. A boat club on the banks of the Sutlej in Ropar has been redeveloped for adventure sports. Heritage buildings from the erstwhile principalities of Patiala, Kapurthala and Sangrur have been restored. The state government recently acquired the palace of Nawab Sher Mohammad Khan in Malerkotla and is developing it for tourism. ■

MILKY WAY
The Chitrakote falls near Jagdalpur

SHUTTERSTOCK



CHHATTISGARH: *MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN ENVIRONMENT*

Green Action

Chhattisgarh is taking big strides in battling air and water pollution, management of solid waste and preserving its forest cover

By Rahul Noronha

Mining of mineral resources such as coal, iron ore and dolomite, of which Chhattisgarh is a leading producer, has given a big boost to mineral-based industries in the state and augmented people's incomes. While this has worsened air and water pollution and thrown up solid waste management challenges, the Chhattisgarh Environment Conservation Board (CESB) has been at the forefront of battling the problem.

The government has set up 18 ambient air quality stations. Raipur, Bhilai and Korba, three prominent municipal corporations most affected by air pollution, have drawn micro action plans under the National Clean Air Programme. The average daily sulphur dioxide (SO_2) concentration in the air has dropped by 37 per cent, from 26.02 µg/m3 in 2016 to 16.34 µg/m3 in 2020. The daily nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) concentration reduced by 17 per cent, from 24.11 µg/m3 to 19.88 µg/m3 in the period.

The state has set up 27 water quality monitoring stations on seven major rivers under the National Water Quality Monitoring Programme. These have found the water quality of five prominent rivers—Kharun, Mahanadi, Hasdeo, Kelo and Shivnath—to be potable. Another 10 stations are being commissioned.

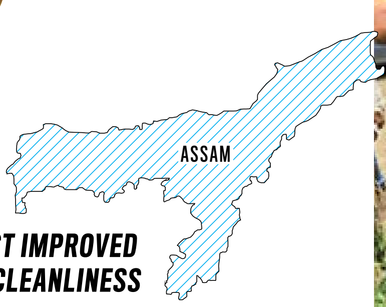
About six million of Chhattisgarh's 28.8 million people reside in urban areas. The urban centres generate about 1,650 tonnes of solid waste every day. The government has launched Mission Clean City across the state, based on the successful decentralised waste segregation/ recycling model in place in Ambikapur. There is a separate facility in Balodabazar district for disposal of hazardous waste. Four units for handling biomedical waste are in the pipeline.

The state's 41 per cent forest cover acts as a sink for greenhouse gases. It is mandated that 30 per cent of any industrial area should be under plantation. According to the India State of the Forest report, the forest cover increased marginally from 41.12 per cent to 41.14 per cent of the area between 2015 and 2019. ■

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES ENVIRONMENT

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
CHHATTISGARH	▲1	2	6	17
KERALA	▲2	8	14	15
ANDHRA PRADESH	▲3	4	20	18
MAHARASHTRA	▲4	9	7	9
KARNATAKA	▼5	1	5	4
UTTARAKHAND	▲6	10	13	16
ODISHA	▲7	13	17	20
ASSAM	▲8	17	19	21
TAMIL NADU	▼9	6	8	11
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼10	7	4	6
WEST BENGAL	◀▶11	11	1	3
BIHAR	▲12	16	9	8
PUNJAB	▼13	5	3	2
UTTAR PRADESH	▲14	15	12	10
RAJASTHAN	▼15	14	11	7
JHARKHAND	▲16	18	10	13
GUJARAT	▲17	19	18	14
MADHYA PRADESH	▼18	12	2	1
HARYANA	▼19	3	14	12
TELANGANA	◀▶20	20	16	19

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES



ASSAM: ***MOST IMPROVED BIG STATE IN CLEANLINESS***

A Clean Sweep

Despite infrastructural setbacks due to recurring floods, the state has ensured toilets for all households

By Kaushik Deka

With more than 40 per cent of its land susceptible to flood damage—17 of 34 districts are severely affected by annual floods—drinking water and sanitation have always been a big challenge for the state. Recurring floods and erosion massively damage water and sanitation infrastructure. Floods in 2019 left 384 piped water supply sources, 1,733 spot sources (mostly hand tubewells) and 92,179 individual household latrines (IHHLs) damaged.

Despite these setbacks, Assam has made significant success in supplying drinking water and maintaining sanitation. Around 86 per cent of households have access to improved drinking water sources. All households have IHHLs and 85 per cent of schools have toilets for girls.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's aim is to provide tap water to all households by 2024. When the Jal Jeevan Mission was launched in the state on August 15, 2019, only 1.76 per cent households across 25,335 villages had tap water supply, which has improved to 13 per cent. The state government has approved schemes for 4.19 million tap water connections; work orders for 1.78 million tap water connections have been issued in 2021-22. ■

SHOWING THE WAY
CM Himanta Biswa Sarma launches the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' mission, Oct. 2017

MOST IMPROVED BIG STATES CLEANLINESS

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
ASSAM	▲1	13	13	17
JHARKHAND	◀▶2	2	3	3
ODISHA	▼3	1	1	2
MADHYA PRADESH	▲4	6	6	6
HARYANA	▼5	4	15	18
BIHAR	▲6	10	4	5
ANDHRA PRADESH	▲7	9	14	11
RAJASTHAN	▲8	11	7	8
UTTARAKHAND	▲9	17	16	19
PUNJAB	▲10	15	16	13
UTTAR PRADESH	▲11	16	9	9
TAMIL NADU	◀▶12	12	8	7
KARNATAKA	▼13	8	18	12
MAHARASHTRA	▲14	20	19	21
GUJARAT	▲15	19	20	20
TELANGANA	▲16	18	11	10
WEST BENGAL	▼17	5	12	15
CHHATTISGARH	▼18	3	2	1
HIMACHAL PRADESH	▼19	7	10	16
KERALA	▼20	14	5	14

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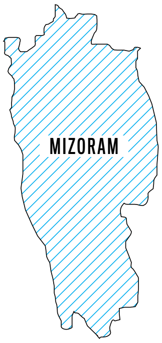
INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC NEWSROOM

MOST
IMPROVED
SMALL STATES

MIZORAM: *MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATE IN ECONOMY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND HEALTH*



A STEADY CLIMB

A healthy GSDP growth rate, funds for infrastructure projects and an improving health system are fuelling Mizoram's upward trajectory

By Kaushik Deka

GETTY IMAGES

For the past couple of years, the Mizoram government has been prioritising the implementation of the state's flagship programme—SEDP, or the Socio-Economic Development Policy. The SEDP aims to bring sustainable development by accelerating progress in key sectors through exploration and judicious use of resources and by maintaining equality and equity among citizens. It also emphasises on political and administrative reforms. And it is producing results. Mizoram registered a growth of 14.07 per cent in its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) during the fiscal 2019-2020, up from 13.04 per cent in 2018-2019 fiscal, according to the Economic Survey 2020-2021.

Mizoram has also been a beneficiary of the Union government's push for development of the northeastern states. For instance, with the help of the fund allocated through the schemes of the MSME ministry, 2,466 MSME units have been registered in Mizoram. Bamboo production in the state, accounting for 14 per cent of India's total production, also contributes significantly to the state's economy.

Mizoram, along with Nagaland, Sik-

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES ECONOMY

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MIZORAM	◀▶ 1	1	1	1
SIKKIM	▲ 2	3	3	8
MANIPUR	▼ 3	2	5	5
NAGALAND	▲ 4	6	6	4
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	◀▶ 5	5	2	2
MEGHALAYA	▲ 6	8	8	6
PUDUCHERRY	▲ 7	9	9	9
TRIPURA	▼ 8	7	7	3
DELHI	▲ 9	10	10	10
GOA	▼ 10	4	4	7

SPIRIT OF YULETIDE Capital Aizawl decked up for Christmas 2016

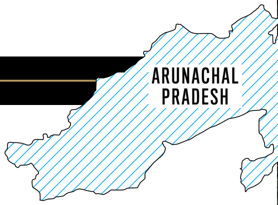
kim and Manipur, is among the states with the lowest infant mortality rate (IMR) in India—just three deaths per 1,000 live births. What makes Mizoram's achievement in this category particularly outstanding is the sharp drop in IMR numbers—from 32 in 2015 to three now. In March, the government's plan to improve the healthcare infrastructure got a boost with the World Bank approving an assistance of $32 million (Rs 238.2 crore) for the Mizoram Health Systems Strengthening Project. The project will strengthen the quality and coverage of services delivered by the state government health systems, the effectiveness of the state health insurance programme, build synergies with the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) and, as a result, reduce financial barriers in accessing hospital services besides preventing catastrophic out-of-pocket expenditure on health by poor families. ■

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES ENTREPRENEURSHIP

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MIZORAM	◀▶1	1	2	1
MANIPUR	◀▶2	2	6	5
TRIPURA	▲3	5	3	3
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▼4	3	10	10
MEGHALAYA	▲5	8	9	9
NAGALAND	▲6	7	1	2
DELHI	▼7	4	8	8
SIKKIM	▼8	6	5	4
GOA	▲9	10	4	6
PUDUCHERRY	▼10	9	7	7

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES HEALTH

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MIZORAM	◀▶1	1	1	4
MANIPUR	◀▶2	2	3	5
SIKKIM	▲3	4	7	7
NAGALAND	▲4	6	5	2
PUDUCHERRY	▼5	3	4	3
MEGHALAYA	▲6	10	6	6
DELHI	◀▶7	7	2	1
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲8	9	10	10
TRIPURA	▼9	8	8	8
GOA	▼10	5	9	9



DOWN A WINDING ROAD A highway in Arunachal Pradesh

M ZHAZO

ARUNACHAL PRADESH: *MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATE IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE*

STRONG CONNECT

A central push for development has been of immense benefit to the border state

By Kaushik Deka

From speeding up work on new tunnels promising all-weather connectivity to building new roads and bridges, India has ramped up its infrastructure development projects in Arunachal Pradesh in recent years. As part of a mega plan, around 20 bridges, a number of tunnels, airbases and several key roads are being developed in strategically key areas. Though the objective is to counter an aggressive China, the central push has immensely benefitted the border state. With 210.5 km of roads available to every 1,000 vehicles, Arunachal Pradesh boasts the highest ratio of road length to vehicles among all states in the country. The state has also promised improved sources of drinking water to every household. At Rs 3.43 crore, the state ranks second among the small states in India in terms of allocation of fund per 100,000 people under AMRUTH.

In terms of governance, the Arunachal government has been pushing hard for the growth of digital infrastructure. Chief Minister Pema Khandu has launched the centrally-funded statewide area network (SWAN), which will provide secure digital connectivity to all the district headquarters and local administrative centres across the state. The Arunachal SWAN (ArSWAN) aims to establish 184 SWAN points of presence in the state.

The state cabinet meetings have also gone paperless with the launch of the e-Cabinet portal recently. In March last year, the state assembly joined the list of India's paperless assemblies with the implementation of e-Vidhan, a project under the Digital India programme. ■

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES INFRASTRUCTURE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲1	3	1	2
MANIPUR	◀▶2	2	4	9
MEGHALAYA	▲3	4	6	4
NAGALAND	▲4	7	8	5
GOA	▲5	9	5	6
TRIPURA	▼6	1	2	1
MIZORAM	▼7	5	7	8
PUDUCHERRY	▲8	10	9	7
DELHI	▼9	8	10	10
SIKKIM	▼10	6	3	3

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES GOVERNANCE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲1	6	3	3
TRIPURA	◀▶2	2	6	7
NAGALAND	◀▶3	3	9	8
SIKKIM	▼4	1	1	1
MANIPUR	▼5	4	7	9
MIZORAM	▲6	10	4	4
DELHI	◀▶7	7	5	5
GOA	▼8	5	2	2
MEGHALAYA	▼9	8	10	10
PUDUCHERRY	▼10	9	8	6

▸ MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES AGRICULTURE

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MANIPUR	▲**1**	4	9	6
SIKKIM	▲**2**	5	6	8
TRIPURA	▼**3**	2	1	2
MEGHALAYA	▼**4**	1	3	1
NAGALAND	▼**5**	3	2	4
MIZORAM	▲**6**	9	8	9
PUDUCHERRY	◂▸**7**	7	4	3
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲**8**	10	7	7
GOA	▼**9**	6	5	5

Note: Delhi was not considered for this category in 2021

FIELD WORK Paddy farming in Manipur

SHUTTERSTOCK

MANIPUR: *MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATE IN AGRICULTURE*

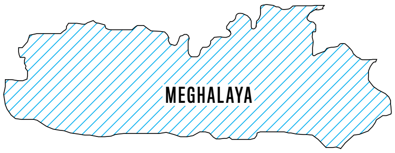
REAPING REWARDS

After bagging the Krishi Karman Award last year, Manipur is working towards self-sustained agriculture via double cropping

By Kaushik Deka

Though agriculture has been the primary source of livelihood for people in all northeastern states, this sector has for decades been crippled by multiple challenges, including low productivity, small holdings, underutilisation of irrigation potential and inadequate infrastructure along the supply chain. Several northeastern state governments have sought to make agriculture productive and economically viable. The Manipur government, for instance, has planned for self-sustained agriculture through double cropping. This even though the state received the Union government's Krishi Karman Award last year for being the best performing state in the overall foodgrain production category-III (production less than 1 million tonne). State chief minister N. Biren Singh hopes to almost double the production of rice—from 510,000 MT (million tonne) to 900,000 MT—over the next five years by increasing the seed replacement rate from the existing 20 per cent to 60 per cent. The agriculture department is also targeting to bring more areas under double cropping by improving irrigation. Despite high rice production, only 30 per cent of the total area under paddy is irrigated currently.

The focus has also been on building infrastructure to support agricultural activities. The chief minister, for instance, recently launched several schemes implemented under the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to support the Manipur State Cooperative Bank, Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS) and Tribal Development Funds (TDF). The scheme will help strengthen the infrastructure of 46 PACS in the state. The TDF projects will achieve stable horticulture-based farming and promote sustainable agriculture and better livelihoods for the communities. ■



MEGHALAYA: MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATE IN EDUCATION, INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

AN ALL ROUNDER

In Meghalaya, the education of, and employment opportunities for, the state's youth are top priority

By Kaushik Deka

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES EDUCATION

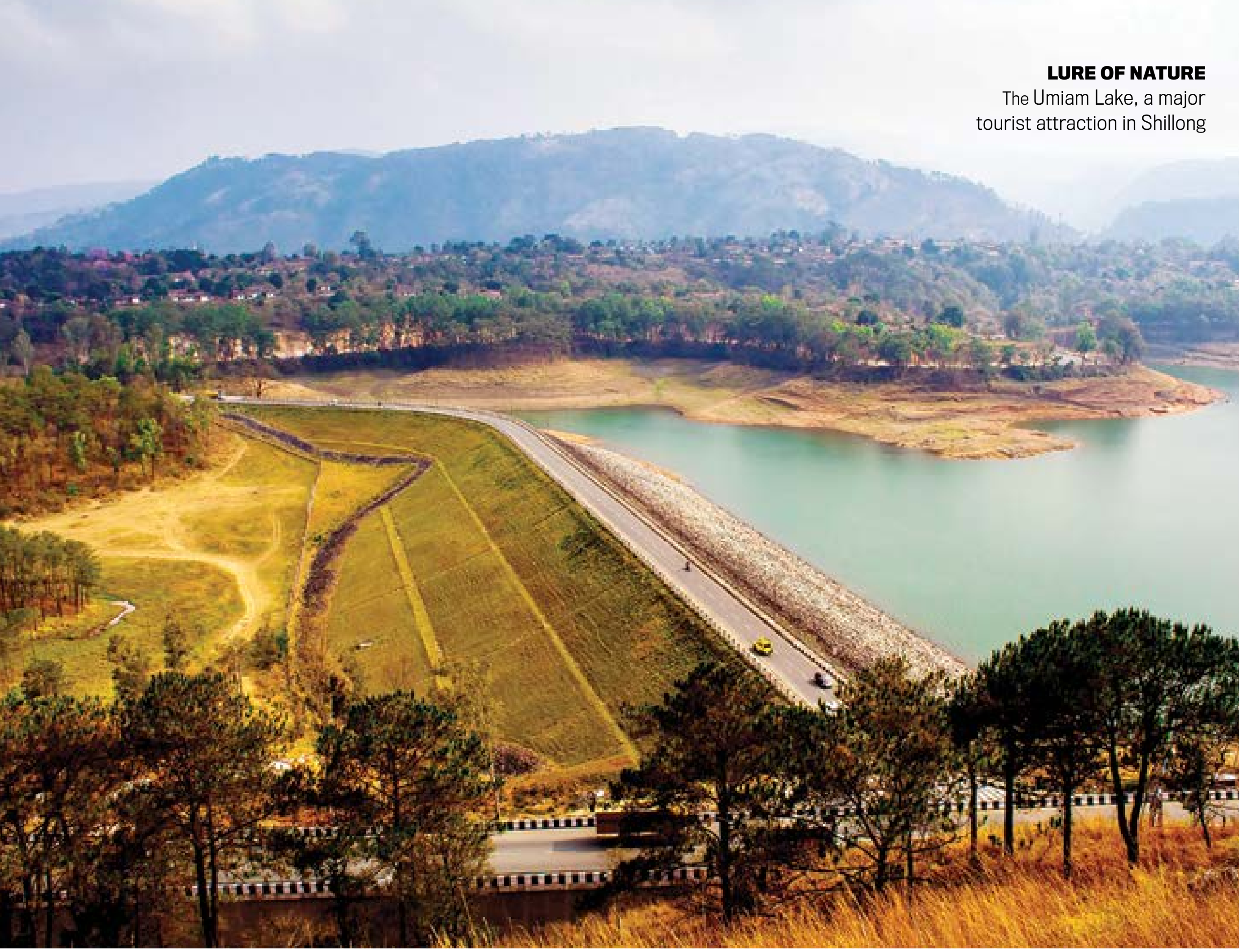
STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MEGHALAYA	▲1	7	6	7
GOA	▲2	4	9	9
MIZORAM	▲3	8	8	6
DELHI	▼4	2	5	8
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▼5	1	1	1
NAGALAND	▼6	5	3	4
MANIPUR	▼7	3	7	5
TRIPURA	▼8	6	2	2
PUDUCHERRY	▲9	10	10	10
SIKKIM	▼10	9	4	3

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MEGHALAYA	◀▶1	1	4	7
MANIPUR	▲2	3	1	2
PUDUCHERRY	▼3	2	2	3
MIZORAM	▲4	6	8	9
TRIPURA	▼5	4	9	1
DELHI	▼6	5	3	4
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	◀▶7	7	7	8
NAGALAND	▲8	9	10	10
GOA	▼9	8	5	5
SIKKIM	◀▶10	10	6	6

On November 6, the University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya, the first private varsity in the northeastern region, was awarded the accreditation rating of "A Grade" by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). This is not surprising news for Meghalaya which has been home to some prestigious higher educational institutes, such as the IIM-Shillong and North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU). What is, however, more encouraging is that the state has done well in primary education as well. With 3,474 schools for every 100,000 children aged between 10 and 14, the state records the highest performance under this parameter among all states. At 1.06, the gender parity index (enrolment ratio of girls to boys) in Meghalaya is also the highest among small states.

When it comes to parameters under inclusive development, the state has done reasonably well. Among small states, it recorded the highest share of individuals



LURE OF NATURE
The Umiam Lake, a major tourist attraction in Shillong

SHUTTERSTOCK

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES TOURISM

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
MEGHALAYA	◄► 1	1	3	10
MIZORAM	▲ 2	10	1	2
GOA	◄► 3	3	2	1
SIKKIM	▲ 4	9	10	4
DELHI	▲ 5	8	4	9
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▼ 6	4	6	3
MANIPUR	▼ 7	2	8	7
PUDUCHERRY	▼ 8	6	9	6
NAGALAND	▼ 9	5	5	8
TRIPURA	▼ 10	6	7	5

benefitting from MNREGA—229 in every 1,000 individuals. With 99.09 per cent offtake rate, the state has done well in public distribution system of foodgrains, the third highest among small states, marginally below Nagaland and Delhi.

Despite Covid playing a massive spoilsport for the tourism industry, which had received 1.2 million domestic tourists before the pandemic, Meghalaya accounted for the second highest share of foreign tourists among the northeastern small states. The state is now planning to micro focus on this revenue generating sector. In November, For instance, Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, announced a Rs 13 crore special package for the development of tourism infrastructure and amenities at Nongkhnum Island, the second-largest river island in Asia after Majuli in Assam. The state government is contemplating ways and means to link fisheries and the tourism sector to augment revenue collection and generate employment opportunities for youths. ■

SIKKIM:
MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATE IN LAW & ORDER AND ENVIRONMENT

DEFENDING ITSELF

Sikkim is not only working hard to eradicate crime, but also guarding itself against climate change

By Romita Datta

Sikkim has increased its forest cover from 43 per cent to 47 per cent in the past two years. The state forest and environment secretary, M.L. Srivastava, gives the credit to the people of Sikkim who have suddenly become conscious of their carbon footprint and climate change.

The state government is planning the fourth instalment of its programme–A Day for Mother Earth–which it observes on July 7 every year. The initiative, launched in 2019, encourages citizens of the state to shut down vehicular movement for seven minutes as a token gesture to reduce air and sound pollution.

To keep track of its own department's daily carbon footprint, the Sikkim government has opened a portal which calculates the daily emissions of 23 departments, like transport, industry, and municipal affairs. The idea is not only to keep emission under check, but also to explore ways to reduce it.

Struggling with drug and alcohol abuse since 2000, the state passed the Sikkim Anti-Drugs Act in 2006 to tackle the drug menace without criminalising the addict. This humane approach has succeeded in getting the youth to reach out for help, medical as well as emotional.

The state has also been able to bring down instances of petty law and order problems, such as robberies and atrocities. ■

▶ MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES LAW & ORDER

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
SIKKIM	▲1	5	9	9
NAGALAND	▲2	8	3	3
MANIPUR	▼3	1	2	2
MIZORAM	▼4	2	5	5
DELHI	▲5	7	10	10
TRIPURA	▲6	9	4	4
MEGHALAYA	▼7	4	8	8
GOA	▼8	3	6	6
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▼9	6	1	1
PUDUCHERRY	◀▶10	10	7	7

PRESERVING BEAUTY A view of the Kanchenjunga mountain, Sikkim

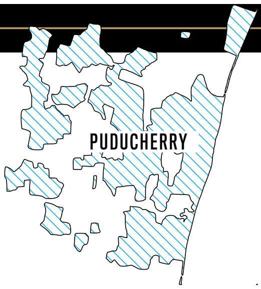
S MAJUMDER/GETTY IMAGES

▶ MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES ENVIRONMENT

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
SIKKIM	▲1	3	7	6
DELHI	◀▶2	2	9	5
PUDUCHERRY	▼3	1	4	10
MEGHALAYA	◀▶4	4	2	3
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	▲5	6	5	8
TRIPURA	▲6	10	10	7
NAGALAND	◀▶7	7	8	9
MIZORAM	▼8	5	3	2
GOA	▼9	8	1	1
MANIPUR	▼10	9	6	4

PUDUCHERRY: *MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATE IN CLEANLINESS*

A TIDY POCKET



With all homes in Puducherry having access to clean water under the Centre's Jal Jeevan Mission, the UT is now putting its efforts behind bettering sanitation

By Amarnath K. Menon

For the Puducherry administration and its residents, cleanliness is next to godliness. No effort is spared to ensure that the Union territory is kept clean and safe. All households use clean fuel for cooking. Another rare distinction is that all schools have toilets for girls.

The UT, under the Union government's flagship programme Jal Jeevan Mission, has been able to provide all homes with a tap connection and access to clean water. Puducherry is planning to get NABL accreditation/ recognition for its water quality testing laboratories and to take up testing of all drinking water sources on a mission mode. It is also planning the effective treatment and reuse of grey water coming out of homes and is actively working towards water source sustainability. Despite the administration's efforts, the UT is still not completely open defecation free and is a laggard in solid waste management. The greatest challenge being that the four regions that make up the UT—Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam and Mahe—are geographically separated from each other.

Apart from this, Puducherry has been consistently working towards the de-silting of ponds and rejuvenation of its local water bodies, which is crucial for drinking water supply schemes. It has 84 irrigation tanks and over 500 ponds, which together serve as the lifelines of groundwater recharging systems, drinking water and agriculture. ■

MOST IMPROVED SMALL STATES CLEANLINESS

STATE	2021	2020	2019	2018
PUDUCHERRY	◀▶ 1	1	3	1
MANIPUR	▲ 2	8	9	8
DELHI	▲ 3	10	10	10
MEGHALAYA	▲ 4	6	4	4
MIZORAM	▼ 5	4	8	9
GOA	▼ 6	2	6	7
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	◀▶ 7	7	5	5
TRIPURA	▼ 8	5	2	3
NAGALAND	▼ 9	3	1	2
SIKKIM	▼ 10	9	7	6

SPICK AND SPAN
The clean streets of Puducherry

BIPLOV BHUYAN/GETTY IMAGES

ANI

JOY TRAIN
A carnival parade on the streets of Goa

BIG STATE: KERALA; SMALL STATE: GOA

WHERE THE REAL WEALTH IS

The Happiness Index, a new category in the 2021 survey, sees Kerala and Goa scoring high on the key parameters to determine the winners

By Jeemon Jacob and Kiran D. Tare

"Happiness depends upon ourselves," said Aristotle. There is no universally accepted method or indicator to evaluate happiness—it is subjective. Hence, measuring collective happiness of a nation or province is a tough task. In 1972, Bhutan started prioritising happiness over other factors, such as wealth and economic growth, and created an indexation for happiness based on multiple measurable factors. In 2012, the Global Happiness Council, a group of independent academicians, devised their own methodology to measure happiness of countries. Such rankings are important because the primary objective of social and economic progress is to create an ease of living resulting in a sense of happiness. This year, India Today State of the State Survey has introduced a new ranking of states based on a happiness index. The best performing states in the happiness index this year are Kerala (big state) and Goa (small state). This, however, does not mean that people in other states are less happy; it is simply a reflection of the performance of these two states across a set of parameters. To calculate the score in happiness index, objective data on prosperity (per capita income, outstanding liabilities to population, CPI, unemployment rate) of a

BEST PERFORMING BIG STATES HAPPINESS INDEX

STATE	SCORE (TOTAL: 1,000)	RANK
KERALA	756.5	1
GUJARAT	686.2	2
TAMIL NADU	662.0	3
HIMACHAL PRADESH	641.0	4
KARNATAKA	628.6	5
MAHARASHTRA	585.8	6
ANDHRA PRADESH	576.2	7
PUNJAB	561.5	8
TELANGANA	539.5	9
HARYANA	497.3	10
UTTARAKHAND	488.8	11
ASSAM	447.5	12
WEST BENGAL	414.9	13
MADHYA PRADESH	374.3	14
CHHATTISGARH	367.3	15
ODISHA	336.1	16
RAJASTHAN	318.8	17
UTTAR PRADESH	271.3	18
BIHAR	261.8	19
JHARKHAND	207.1	20

BEST PERFORMING SMALL STATES HAPPINESS INDEX

STATE	SCORE (TOTAL: 1,000)	RANK
GOA	776.1	1
SIKKIM	717.1	2
PUDUCHERRY	703.9	3
MIZORAM	643.8	4
DELHI	627.7	5
NAGALAND	544.4	6
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	520.4	7
TRIPURA	457.5	8
MEGHALAYA	453.2	9
MANIPUR	433.1	10

state, along with scores from its rankings in education, health governance, infrastructure, law and order, environment and cleanliness were considered.

As per PRS India's Kerala Budget Analysis 2020-21, the state's economy is the ninth largest in the country with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of Rs 9.78 lakh crore in 2020-21. It ranks fourth in terms of per capita GSDP (Rs 2.4 lakh in 2021-22).

That the inflation rate and liabilities on the population have remained in single digits is indicative of an effective public distribution system and investment in infra development. The state government has set up the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board to mobilise resources for faster development. It has spent over Rs 60,000 crore in the past five and a half years in developing healthcare services, education, sanitation, water supply, transportation and power sectors. The Left Democratic Front government headed by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has also launched a semi high-speed rail corridor, the Silverline rail project, to ensure better connectivity to the state.

"Kerala is developing the state with specific targets. We have launched several missions to ensure inclusive development for all. We are working on programmes to make the state investor-friendly and are investing heavily in creating public assets. The Kerala Life Mission (a campaign to build houses for families without land or housing) offered over 500,000 houses to the poor free of cost. Our commitment to the people is to ensure transparency in governance and improve service delivery to the needy," says CM Vijayan.

On November 3, after the Union government slashed the prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 5 and Rs 7, respectively, Goa chief minister Pramod Sawant cut them further by Rs 7 each. The reduced fuel prices have helped the Goa government control inflation in three weeks. This was the state government's second gift to its citizens in two months. From November 1, the state government has been providing 16,000 litres of free water per month to each household at a cost of Rs 8 crore. The loss-making decision, however, has resulted in zero water bills for about 80 per cent of Goa's residents.

An otherwise sleepy state, Goa gets into governance mode in times of crises. In September, CM Sawant launched the 'Sarkar Tumchya Dari' (government at your doorstep) initiative, taking 152 schemes of his government to the people. He claimed that in the first week of November, thousands of beneficiaries were identified under this initiative and had begun receiving benefits.

Iron ore mining ground to a halt in the state in March 2017, resulting in an annual loss of Rs 1,000 crore to the state exchequer. The Covid-mitigating lockdown in 2020 left the tourism sector paralysed with a loss of another Rs 1,000 crore. Goa's annual unemployment rate is 15.9 per cent. However, the state maintained its numero uno position in per capita income. In 2019-20, Goa's per capita income was Rs 4.35 lakh, highest in the country and way above the national average of Rs 1.35 lakh.

Goans have done remarkable work in the fields of cleanliness and environment protection. They vehemently opposed the proposal to increase coal transportation in south Goa as well as the setting up of a campus for the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) by destroying forest cover in north Goa in the past one year. An improved infrastructure, in terms of road network and power supply, too, has bettered the lifestyle of Goa's residents CM Sawant attributes Goa's progress on the happiness front to the tireless work of government employees in the pandemic. "We were able to bring the state back to normalcy because of them," he says.

The Goans' thirst for happiness was seen on social media too. A mobile app called 'The Happiness Project' has been popular among the people. On it, one can play one of four games to contribute to happiness research in five minutes. Thousands of people played the games over a million times in less than four months. ■

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INDIA'S BEST B-SCHOOLS
MSME SECTOR IN DIRE STRAITS
BARMER NEW BOOM TOWN
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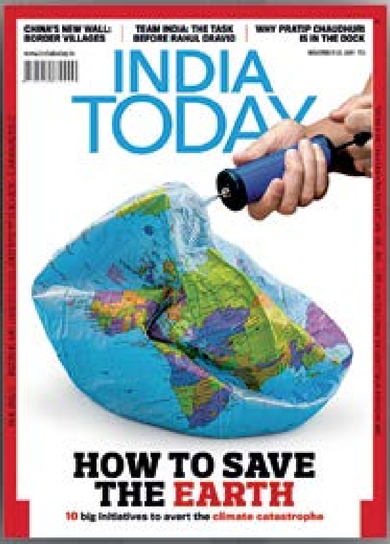
THE NEW RULES OF DATING
HOW A DISTINCT DIGITAL ETIQUETTE IS HELPING INDIAN SINGLES SHED THEIR PANDEMIC INHIBITIONS AND REDISCOVER ROMANCE



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SEEING RED

A PORTRAIT OF **SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI**, THE POLITICIAN, AS A FIRST-TIME NOVELIST

Photograph by BANDEEP SINGH

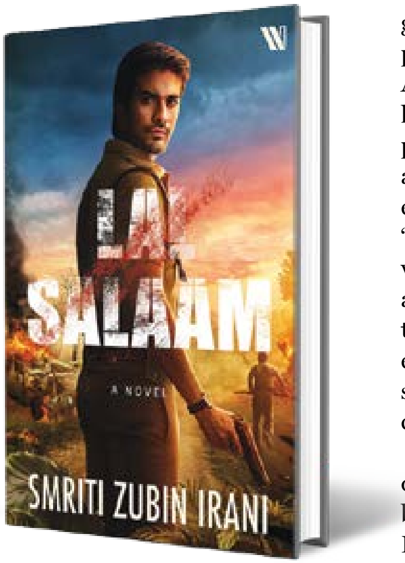
Shortly after Maoists ambushed a CRPF convoy on April 6, 2010, killing 76 of its personnel, Smriti Zubin Irani was invited to discuss the violence on a 9 o'clock television news programme. Irani remembers the day well: "One of the panelists said, 'When you get into the armed or paramilitary forces and wear its uniform, you know you have written a prescription for your own death.' What if a family member of an officer was watching that debate? I was infuriated, and for a decade, that rage only kept building."

Anger—never an easy emotion to process—sometimes needs to be channelised, and for Irani, it was her writing desk that became a site of catharsis. "I wanted to manifest my rage somewhere, and I thought it could be expressed as part of a fictional story," she says. *Lal Salaam*, Irani's debut novel, releases on November 29. On the surface, it has attributes of a thriller—unadorned prose, unobvious twists, an undeterred detective—but beneath it all, the book is plain polemic. It rebukes Maoism, its philosophies, practice and also its idealisation. "For the longest time, the romanticisation of the Naxal movement was a story told everywhere. Popular literature never really made place for the gory truth."

In 2015, when Irani was the Union minister for human resource development, she went to Dantewada to meet its people, especially its children, but her research for *Lal Salaam*, she tells INDIA TODAY, exceeded the odd official trip: "I have had the privilege of meeting some of the finest officers who have served in the red corridor. It was from their experiences, from public records, from my interface with citizens at large, that I've tried to draw a parallel to the ground operations of the Naxal movement."

Though Ambuja, the Chhattisgarh town Irani imagines for her novel, has all the beleaguered signposts one would expect in a conflict zone, Irani even wanted to picture "its foliage". Nothing is safe here, nothing comforting. In thrillers, outsiders invariably disturb the status quo when they arrive. *Lal Salaam's* SP Vikram Pratap Singh, of course, does more when he enters the scene. A martial arts enthusiast, he first beats three goons black and blue and is soon hot on the heels of elusive Maoists.

Even though Singh's powers of deduction are astonishing—characters in the novel liken him to popular detectives such as Sherlock Holmes and Colonel Vinod—he can, at times, be hard to like. When, for instance, one of his colleagues explains that his parents named him 'Bhoomi' after the 'most precious entity', the earth, Singh thinks to himself, "Oh dear God. Cocky and preachy." Only in the second half of the novel do we see the haughty, aloof protagonist forsake heroics for a more compassionate heroism.



LAL SALAAM
Smriti Zubin Irani
WESTLAND
₹399; 254 pages

"FOR THE LONGEST TIME, THE ROMANTICISATION OF THE NAXAL MOVEMENT WAS A STORY TOLD EVERYWHERE. POPULAR LITERATURE NEVER REALLY MADE PLACE FOR THE GORY TRUTH"

"No human can be perfect. If they are, they would be nothing less than god. Heroes have feet of clay when we put them on a pedestal," Irani says. After a pause, she clarifies with a hearty laugh, "I say that from a literary perspective." Irani believes cinema and OTT platforms have gotten audiences somewhat used to shades of grey: "There is now enough space for an individual to look fallible." In giving Singh an obvious arc, Irani wanted to "liberate this character, so that he underwent every emotion, rather than stick to one silo or range. I hoped to give all my characters this resonance".

Irani's characters are all defined by quirks and traits—Hawaldar Gayaram by his wry, resigned humour; journalist Devika Doria by her spunk—but there are dots other than those of empathy that one joins while reading *Lal Salaam*. Irani says, "I think readers will also feel a sense of satisfaction when they recall real incidents, incidents they might have read about in the papers, while reading a particular chapter." It's this piecing of the puzzle, this finding of fact in fiction, that comes to feel the most urgent.

When Singh's list of Maoist suspects comes to include a Delhi University PhD student and his internationally reputed professor, one soon thinks of the controversial Bhima Koregaon arrests. Irani, though, reminds us that the book is set in 2010, not in the recent past. In May 2018, she had launched filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri's book *Urban Naxals*. Today, when asked if the term can be employed for some of her characters, she says, "This is what I wanted—my readers to start relating the book to real life. But we must remember that everybody has different realities and they will read in multiple ways.”

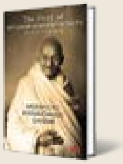
Irani, one is likely to think, has been travelling the literary circuit for longer than just a few days. Ask her if there is a possibility of her very cinematic book being made into a film and she’ll say, “I want to see it out in another language first.” Later, talking about her decision to write the book in a first-person male voice, the Union minister for women and child development adds, “There is a presumption that I will be inclined towards the female component of a story, given my body of work till now, socially, even creatively. I think it’s surprising for people to see me create strong characters in a male realm.”

The BJP leader speaks frankly. She seems to greatly value her relationship with her editor—Westland’s Karthika V.K.—despite the fact that they do not share the same politics: “What makes the creative field so distinct is the fact that we can leave our ideologies at the doorstep and bring to life imaginary characters and also a story that will resonate with audiences. This was true for when I was an actor, too. The crew of *Kyunki... Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* had all of 250 people, and only I was from the BJP.”

For Irani, it is on “the nib” of her pen that her several identities—politician, actor, writer—converge: “Writing is an amalgamation of experience.” Interestingly, she calls herself a “citizen author”. She says her book, *Lal Salaam*, is “an appeal to people to keep believing in the establishment, in institutions, in the Constitution”. As Irani starts talking about the pandemic, about lasting partnerships between people and the State, she delivers a pithy message—“democracy delivers”. The teeming ranks of this country’s disadvantaged and aggrieved might question her optimism. But there’s no denying the fact that the honourable minister is now a bona fide purveyor of fiction. ■

–Shreevatsa Nevatia

WRITE LIKE A NETA



The Story of my Experiments with Truth (1927)
by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
OM BOOKS
₹**295; 568** pages

The autobiography is an urtext for biographers and historians to plunder for insights into Gandhi. It dealt with his early years as a lawyer in South Africa and then the freedom struggle.

My Truth (1980)
by Indira Gandhi
VISION BOOKS
₹**195; 176** pages

My Truth came out for the first time in 1980. Based on interviews, the book covers Gandhi’s life from childhood to her political highs and lows; both a memoir and a broad account of contemporary India.

Twenty-One Poems (2001)
by Atal Bihari Vajpayee; translated by Pavan K. Varma
PENGUIN VIKING
₹**299; 88** pages

Former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s *Twenty-One Poems* deals with violence, power and inequality. His literary output also includes a collection of speeches and a book on foreign policy.

Visible Muslim, Invisible Citizen: Understanding Islam in Indian Democracy (2018)
by Salman Khurshid
RUPA PUBLICATIONS
₹**595; 320** pages

This 2018 title is Salman Khurshid’s attempt at unpacking religion and practice, whilst presenting a rich portrait of India’s Muslims.

Kabita Bitan (2020)
by Mamta Banerjee
DEY’S PUBLISHING
₹**1,200; 951** pages

If there is a news event, there is likely a Didi poem to accompany it. Didi has rhapsodised on everything. *Kabita Bitan* is her latest–a collection of 946 poems–whose title is supposedly inspired by Rabindranath Tagore’s *Gitabitan*.

The Discovery of India (1946)
by Jawaharlal Nehru
PENGUIN INDIA
₹**699; 656** pages

India’s first PM undertook this literary voyage while in Ahmednagar prison for three years in the 1940s. The book documents history and meanders through philosophy. It was later made into a series by Shyam Benegal.

The Insider (1998)
by Narasimha Rao
PENGUIN INDIA
₹**850; 844** pages

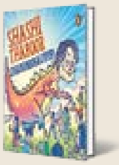
Rao’s 767-page, loosely autobiographical novel, tracking a Congressman through various eras, barely lived up to the hype. Better known for its leaked sex scenes, the tome was trashed for its turgid prose.

Left Hand Drive: Concrete Analysis of Concrete Conditions (2012)
by Sitaram Yechury
PRJASAKTI BOOK HOUSE
₹**325; 550** pages

Before the Communists became a speck in the rear-view mirror electorally, their ideologue Sitaram Yechury published this collection of columns on social, political and economic concerns.

Exam Warriors (2018)
by Narendra Modi
PENGUIN
₹**100; 208** pages

The guidebook, released in 2018 and again in 2021, looked at competition, classroom challenges and technology. Its author, who is not known for fielding questions, was only too happy to help students in preparing to answer them.



Tharoorosaurus (2020)
by Shashi Tharoor
PENGUIN VIKING
₹**399; 336** pages

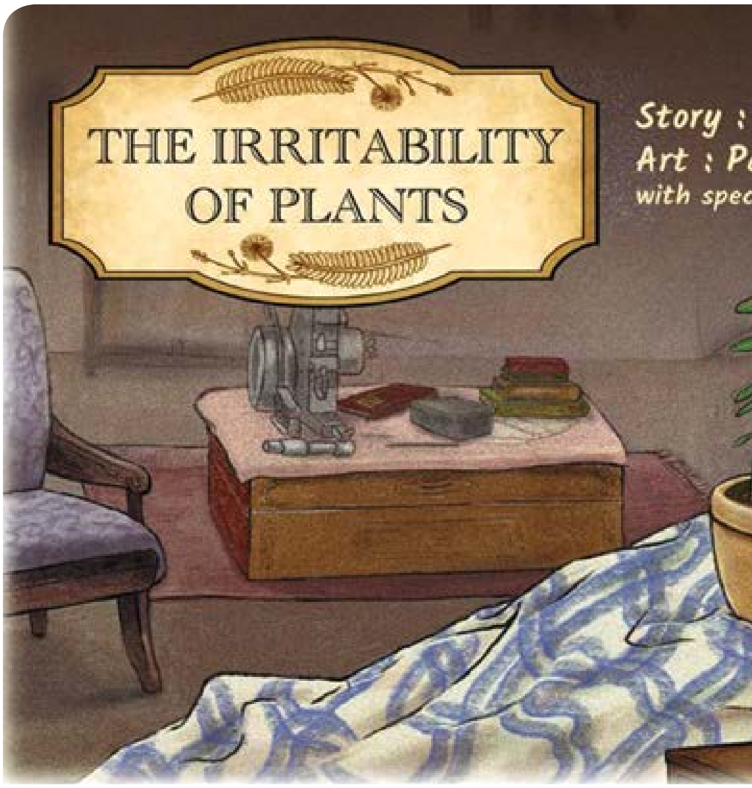
Rodomontade (boastful talk), esurient (greedy), snollygoster (shrewd person), have all been inserted into public discourse and twitter timelines by Tharoor. Here are 53 examples from his copious vocabulary.

-Bhavya Dore

BOOKS

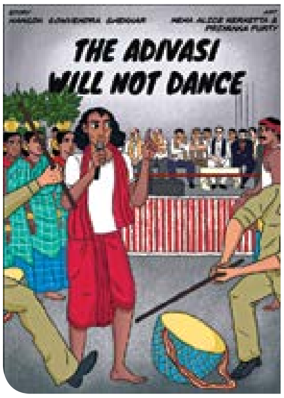
MAKES GOOD COMIC SENSE

Comixense, *a new comics quarterly, could well prove to be great mind candy for a digital generation*



Ulugh Beg from Samarkand meets Ptolemy in a fantastical city of astronomers. A Chinese girl named Yong Le confronts the plague and its prejudices in medieval Italy. The scientist Jagdish Chandra Bose investigates the irritability of plants in early 20th-century Bengal. These are just a few of the varied and richly illustrated stories in *Comixense*, a new comics quarterly published by the Ektara Trust.

The brainchild of comics artist Orijit Sen, *Comixense* is targeted primarily at school-goers: the aim, in Sen's words, is to reach out to young minds "in a manner that credits their intelligence, imagination and empathy". It isn't the first magazine with that ambition: the much-loved *Target* worked the same beat in the '80s, and in more recent times, the excellent Hindi magazine *Chakmak* has brought together a dazzling array of writing and illustrating talent in its pages.

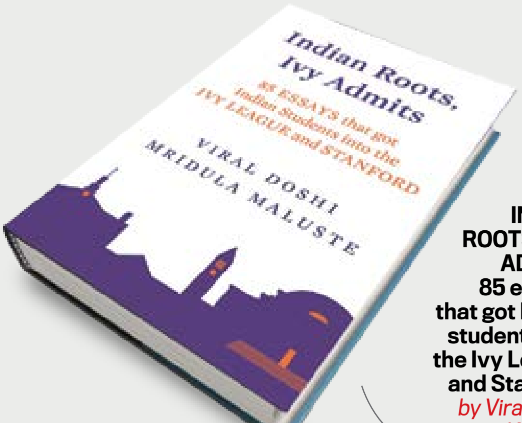


Where *Comixense* stands out is in its progressive slant and its political and ecological consciousness. Case in point:

BOOKS

OPERATION IVY

A GUIDE TO STANDING OUT AMONG THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST THROUGH YOUR PERSONAL ESSAY

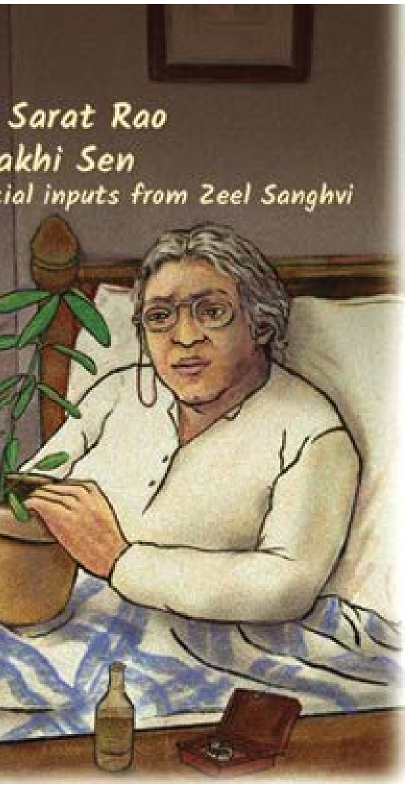


INDIAN ROOTS, IVY ADMITS
85 essays that got Indian students into the Ivy League and Stanford
by Viral Doshi and Mridula Maluste
WESTLAND
₹599; 390 pages

The Indian student diaspora numbers over 1.1 million, as per the ministry of external affairs. A majority are in North America, followed by West Asia, Trans-Tasman and the UK. The pandemic reduced the outflow to a quarter of a million students in 2020, but the top destinations are seeing an uptick in applications this year.

Imagine the readership of *Indian Roots, Ivy Admits*—every one of the 55,000 applicants who made it to universities in the US for the Fall 2021 semester, the 67,000 who went to Canada and the tens of thousands who applied to Europe and Australia.

As every applicant knows, grades and test scores matter, but 'soft factors' like extracurriculars and recommendations are equally, if not more, important. To truly stand out among the best and brightest, you need a cracking good college essay. It's easily the most stressful part


Sarat Rao
akhi Sen
ial inputs from Zeel Sanghvi

Each issue of the magazine—three published so far—explores broad themes, such as the nature of scientific knowledge, with imagination and ingenuity

comixense
comixense
comixense

COMIXENSE
by Orijit Sen (Editor)
EKTARA TRUST
₹200
(per issue)

The Adivasi Will Not Dance, based on a story by the Jharkhand writer Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar. In harrowing words and images, it describes the devastation of Santhal homelands by coal mining corporations: the ochre earth turning black, the trees sprouting black leaves, the children forever covered in fine dark dust. Another piece, *Playing with Bats*, deploys a colourfully naïve style only to reveal chillingly that its child protagonist was the first person infected with the Ebola virus. Detective Moochwala this certainly isn't.

Each issue of the magazine—three have been published so far—explores broad themes, such as the nature of scientific knowledge, with imagination and ingenuity. The pieces range from immersive long narratives to shorter texts and two-pagers. Meticulously detailed period stories, sci-fiscapes in Moebius hues, a sea storm transformed into a fantastical all-devouring dragon: there's no shortage of mind candy here.

The question remains of how young digital natives will receive this material. Part of Sen's agenda is to introduce today's generation to the pleasures of print comics. But crucially, the magazine lacks the humour and pacy storytelling that typically draws teenagers to the medium. Instead, there's an emphasis on factual information that may be too dry for some. The slabs of explanatory material that follow each story seem inessential: Wouldn't it be far more rewarding for young readers to search the Net and scurry down rabbit holes of their own choosing?

These worries aside, *Comixense* is a welcome addition to the Indian comics scene. The artistic talent it assembles is impressive and the prospect of discovering more such exciting work should be reason enough to sign up for a subscription. Overall, this comics anthology makes a lot of sense. ■

–Rajesh Devraj

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of the elaborate admissions process. Ivy League schools are highly selective and devote time and resources to the screening process. Here, the personal essay carries a great deal of weight.

This is where Viral Doshi and Mridula Maluste come in. *Indian Roots, Ivy Admits* is a purposive and lucid guide to a well-crafted, arresting personal essay. Each example is followed by precise and erudite commentary explaining its appeal.

The first major takeaway is that there's no one format for a college essay. This is not a *kunji* (literally a key; colloquially, a booklet that helps you crack exams without sloughing through textbooks). There's no standard key, because there's no standard lock. Every individual is different, so every essay has to be. The essay, the book shows, should be authentic. So, be credible, own your vulnerabilities and don't be self-conscious about your achievements. A seriousness of purpose and the ability to laugh at yourself will not go amiss.

The authors have divided the essays into 10 sections. You can take any one of these routes. The subject need not be unique because the narratives are personal and, therefore, distinct. Food is an obvious attention grabber. As is music.

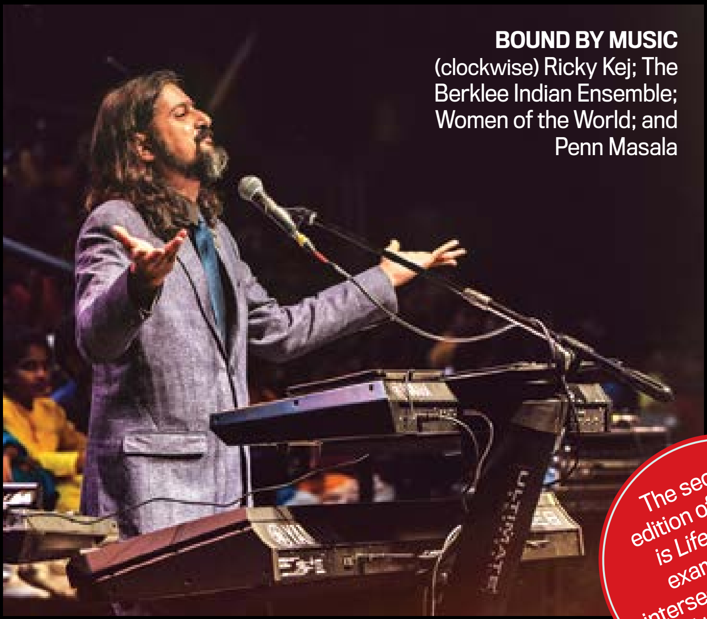
In 'The Family Crucible' section, an amateur writer recounts how creative gifts for her mother dovetailed into an entrepreneurial venture. Other essays in the section spin narratives around the sibling dynamic. One, on 'being Marwadi', celebrates the community connection. In 'Coming of Age', we read about identity formation and epiphanies. There are essays on dealing with health challenges within the family/friend circuit and even on the emotional baggage of Partition.

The applicants, the book tells us, by and large do not dwell on the larger questions–climate change, global governance, systemic inequalities, gender parity and so on. That's perhaps how it should be. They are applying for college, not the IAS. Their problem-solving skills can be brought to bear on the future of humanity later in life.

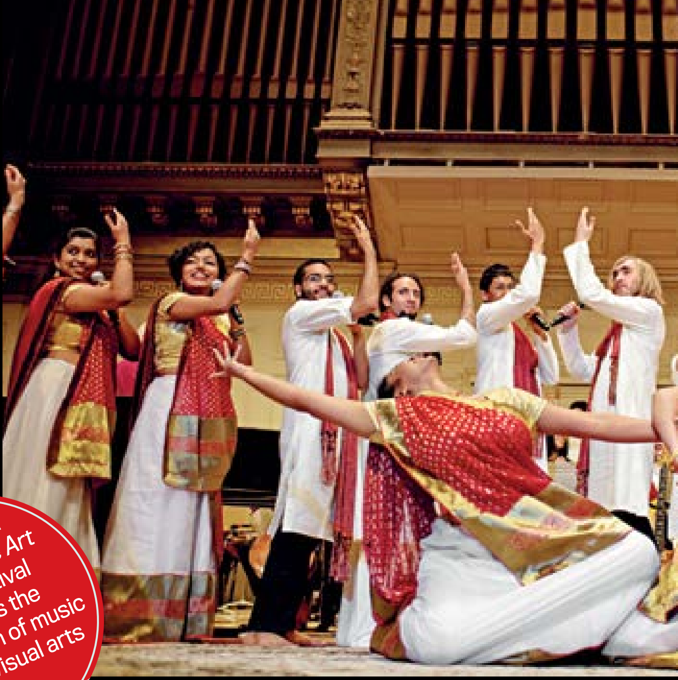
***INDIA ROOTS, IVY ADMITS* IS A PURPOSIVE, LUCID GUIDE TO A WELL-CRAFTED, ARRESTING PERSONAL ESSAY**

If you are planning to apply abroad, this book is a worthwhile investment. It doesn't matter if you are not from a big-name school, weren't part of a model UN. If, in your essay, you can show the evaluators what they want to see, you're in with a chance. ■

–Bhavdeep Kang



BOUND BY MUSIC
(clockwise) Ricky Kej; The Berklee Indian Ensemble; Women of the World; and Penn Masala



The second edition of the Art is Life festival examines the intersection of music and the visual arts

MUSIC FOR ART'S SAKE

PENN MASALA AND RICKY KEJ ARE JUST SOME OF THE ARTISTS TAKING PART IN AN UPCOMING VIRTUAL FEST THAT FUSES ART WITH MUSIC

M

“Museums can't just be spaces where people come in and look at objects. It has to be a space for ideas and conversations. Art isn't just something that is hanging on the walls of a gallery. It is a part of our lives,” says Kamini Sawhney, the director of Museum of Art & Photography (MAP), which opened in Bengaluru last year. It was this rethinking of the relationship between a museum and its audience that birthed *Art is Life*, a digital festival which returns for its second edition next month (December 3-5) and can be accessed on Map-india.org/.

This year, the festival examines the intersection of music and the visual arts. “There is such a universality in music, it appeals to people across age groups. And we have everything, from pop and Carnatic to jazz and rap,” says Sawhney. Since the focus this year is on music, MAP is collaborating with the renowned Berklee College of Music to bring a festival that is packed with a variety of performances, panel discussions, educational workshops and exhibitions, featuring over 65 artists from India and around the world. The musical line-up includes acts like Penn Masala, Ricky Kej, Vidya Shah, SubraMania and Women of the World.

Annette Philip, an award-winning musician and faculty member of Berklee, was part of the many brainstorming sessions that were held for this year's festival. “From the get-go, the goal was to use digital spaces to create opportunities for people to be exposed to art forms they may not have explored before,” she says. For *Art is Life*, Philip will also be conducting a workshop and performing with the Berklee Indian Ensemble (which she founded in 2011) and Women of the World. “With Berklee Indian Ensemble, I envisioned a safe space for musicians from all over the world to come together, learn about Indian music and culture, and also feel comfortable enough to bring their own rich cultural heritage to the mix. The year 2021 marks the 10th year anniversary of the group and since then almost 450 musicians from 52 countries have been part of it,” she says.

Penn Masala, the biggest American a cappella group of South Asian origin, is one of the most anticipated acts. The goal of their performance, they say, is “to showcase our unique blend of South Asian and Western melodies in an emotional way that could be meaningful and engaging to a virtual audience.” Another concert to look forward to is Grammy Award-winning composer Ricky Kej's. He directs *Bursts of Sound*, a project which brings together musicians from India, the US and Vietnam. “This is the most organic session I have done in a long

time. It was also a lot of fun recording many musicians. Not in a sterile studio environment, but actually capturing their natural sounds within their natural habitat," says Kej. For example, when they filmed tribal farmers in Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh, it started to rain, but the farmers continued to sing. "The musician in me kept telling me to stop filming to prevent background noise from coming in, but I ended up following their lead and went with the flow, allowing sounds of nature to become part of the music," adds Kej.

In the end, it is Philip who sums up the purpose and ambition of the festival: "We hope to find a way to gently remind people of how music can be used to soothe the senses, energise us, and inspire us in ways that transcend language, cultural and even psychological barriers." ■

–Vijayeta Basu

MUSIC

Proof of Identity

Guitarist Shubh Saran is trying to find a middle ground between his Indian roots and global influences

Brooklyn-based guitarist and composer Shubh Saran has a rather interesting background. As the son of diplomats, he travelled around the world with his parents and grew up in countries like Bangladesh, Egypt and Switzerland. "I think the way my upbringing has influenced my music is more based on the lack of 'Indianness' I feel sometimes, while at the same time feeling 'too Indian' in some situations," says Saran. "When I'm outside India, I feel very much an Indian, but I didn't have an Indian upbringing. So, when I moved back to India during my high school years, I felt very different from other Indians," says Saran. On one level, visiting India doesn't feel like coming back home for him, but on another, it does. He feels the same about New York, where he has been living since 2014.

The result of being caught in these contradictions all his life is *Inglish*, a 10-track all-instrumental record, available on Spotify, which he released in October. The title is a portmanteau of 'Indian' and 'English', a mishmash that resonates with Saran. "It speaks to my identity. It's uniquely Indian, but at the same time it's not traditionally Indian," he says.

Saran's questions about his identity seem to find answers in his new music—a seamless blend of Indian and Middle Eastern influences, merged with contemporary jazz and rock sounds. Having picked up the guitar at the age of 12, Saran later enrolled in Boston's Berklee College of Music, which, according to him, gave him the musical vocabulary to articulate what he had been thinking as a self-taught guitarist till then. "The melodies in my head are definitely influenced by Indian traditions, because I grew up listening to them. At the same time, I have a deep emotional connection to rock, jazz and metal as well. It's me trying to find the middle ground, this time in music," Saran adds.

Exploring themes of ethnicity and identity, Saran says, can be a bit tricky. Whenever he explained his songs to those close to him, they always urged him to share the meaning behind them in some kind of a longer format. "The podcast [*Offstage with Shubh Saran*] started with the intention of dissecting my songs, but it quickly morphed into something bigger. For the series, I have interviewed 17 musicians of Indian origin from all over the world. So they have their struggles with identity as well," he says. Clearly, for Saran, it is equally important to navigate and assimilate in a global world as it is to let the roots run deep. ■

–Vijayeta Basu

SHUBH SARAN'S questions about his identity find answers in his new album—**Inglish**, an all-instrumental record released in October

Jimmy Sheirgill is all set to make his Netflix debut with the heist comedy drama Choona

RAAJESSH KASHYAP/ GETTY IMAGES

OTT

A Quiet Confidence

As season 2 of web series *Your Honour* releases online, **Jimmy Sheirgill** reflects on the creative satisfaction he has found in playing the lead role of a judge whose moral compass is put to the test

November 19 turned out to be a great day for Jimmy Sheirgill. Not only did the second season of his popular web series, *Your Honor*, drop on SonyLIV that day, but it was also the day Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Centre's decision to repeal the contentious farm laws that had led to massive protests by India's farmers. As one of the top Punjabi actors to have supported the farmers' agitation (his Instagram profile photo has the words 'No farmers, no food' stamped on it), Sheirgill had reason to rejoice. "I stick to what I feel is right," says Sheirgill about his stance. "I know there are two sides to a coin always, but there are certain issues where there are no two sides." He remained quiet on social media, though. But that's typical Sheirgill, an artist who has quietly gone about his job for two decades, impressing with each performance—be it in a drama like *Yahaan* or comedies like the *Tanu Weds Manu* films.

With *Your Honor*, the actor has, for a change, made some noise. He plays the leading role—a judge who loses his moral compass as he tries to save his teenage son from a life behind bars. In doing so, he disrupts the lives of other innocent people. A remake of an acclaimed Israeli drama, *Your Honor* was also remade in English last year with Bryan Cranston (of *Breaking Bad* fame) in the lead role. "A lot of web shows came my way, but they didn't excite me that much," says Sheirgill. "It needs to be memorable and worthwhile." In *Your Honor's* script of over 500 pages, the 50-year-old found the material he sought. The show worked even as it struggled to hold pace in its first season's 12-episode run. Playing Judge Bishan Khosla, says Sheirgill, brought him a creative satisfaction that had eluded him over the past few years. "*Ismein bahut mazaa hai* (there's great pleasure in it)," he says. "It is draining, but I love it."

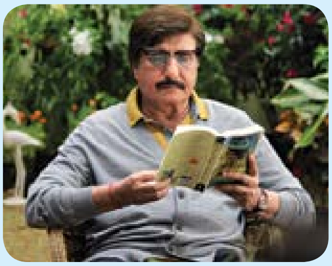
The crux of *Your Honor* is a father-son story—the former desperately trying to establish a connection with his child. "The beauty of playing him is that there are five million things happening simultaneously and he has to keep a straight face throughout," says Sheirgill. "He is respected by all because of his honesty and for taking the right decisions [in court], but in his personal life, he is not in a good space."

In 2022, Sheirgill will have two Punjabi releases. The actor smoothly juggles Hindi and Punjabi cinema, choosing to do at least one in his mother tongue every year and a half. Apart from these, his third streaming show is ready for release, too. He makes his Netflix debut with the heist comedy drama, *Choona*. The Sheirgill show goes on both on the big and small screen. ■

–Suhani Singh

WATCHLIST

INDIA SERIALISED



Dil Bekaraar

Disney+ Hotstar, Nov 26

Based on Anuja Chauhan's popular novel *Those Pricey Thakur Girls*, the web series is set in 1980s Delhi. The rom-com, directed by Habib Faisal, revolves around a TV newsreader and a rebellious journalist.

◆

LIONSGATE PLAY ORIGINALS
hiccups & hookups
(OF A) NO FILTER FAMILY

Hiccups & Hookups

Lionsgate Play, Nov 26

The platform's first Indian original series bills itself as "an irreverent family dramedy" with Lara Dutta and Prateik Babbar as a sibling duo who are seen negotiating the topsy-turvy world of dating.

◆

Inside Edge Season 3

Amazon Prime Video, Dec 3

India's first major web series returns for another season of drama, conflict, power games, locker room and boardroom politics, highlighting the dark underbelly of Indian cricket.

CINEMA

Not a Bang, a Whimper

Kartik Aaryan's attempt at a weightier role falls short of expectations

Arjun Pathak (Kartik Aaryan) is a disgraced TV news anchor exiled to the world of radio. When a man calls on his show with a bomb threat, he dismisses it as a prank until there's a blast on the Sea Link in Mumbai. In this public tragedy, Pathak sees an opportunity for self-preservation and leverages his access to an active criminal with a TV news channel to get back in the anchor's chair. But as the bomber shares his motivations (read frustrations) on live TV, Arjun finds his conscience pricked.

Arjun's inner struggle is also brought on by the presence of his cold-hearted producer (Amruta Subhash), obsessed with ratings and less concerned about the lives at stake (when a guest is killed in the newsroom, she is least perturbed). As a terror attack is covered in real time, she is seen issuing directives such as "sad music *badhao*" and "ratings *check karo*". The exchanges between Arjun and the producer, though, are hard to believe and feature cringe-worthy dialogues.

Aaryan, having played the manchild often in young adult comedies like the *Pyaar ka Punchnama* films, tries to make a case through *Dhamaka* that he is capable of more, that he is game for carrying a drama. However, he struggles to be up to the task for 100 minutes.

On paper, *Dhamaka* is a remake of Korean dramatic thriller *The Terror Live*, in which a media personality is at the mercy of a disgruntled caller. In Ram Madhvani's hands, though, it runs like a diatribe against Indian news channels with their hunger to sensationalise events for ratings and less a nuanced examination of an anti-hero or an invigorating conversation between a criminal and an anchor he holds hostage over the phone.

It's not that *Dhamaka* is entirely bereft of ideas. Madhvani weaves in some talking points—how news dictates public perception and frames narratives, the media's responsibility to the public, the gaping class disparity. But for a film that harps on the lack of empathy among its characters, it struggles to evoke any feeling among its audiences. That's because Arjun's moral conundrum gets precedence over the bomber's more affecting story.

Madhvani and his team appear too invested in technical showmanship as they build up the thrill with close-ups, snappy cuts and multiple cameras. In the process, a premise that's ripe for an edge-of-the-seat experience ends up being a drab affair. *Dhamaka*, much like the industry it attacks for its lack of authenticity, often feels contrived. It's not that it is 'faking' the narrative, but more like it's not 'feeling' it. ■

-Suhani Singh

IN *DHAMAKA*, KARTIK AARYAN PLAYS AN AMBITIOUS NEWSMAN WHO GROWS A CONSCIENCE

✕

Q+A

SHUTTLE TRAINER

Having coached the likes of Saina Nehwal and P.V. Sindhu, **Pullela Gopichand** *uses his autobiography,* **Shuttler's Flick: Making Every Match Count,** *to share his recipes for success*

Photograph by BANDEEP SINGH

Q. Why did you choose to integrate self-help elements with your personal story in this book?

It was the result of a lot of questions–parents and players would often ask about training; coaches would ask what they should teach. My co-author, Priya (Kumar), has a lot of experience with writing self-help books, so she could actually break it down into points, which made the book relevant for everyone.

Q. You were quite aggressive as a player but are equally calm as a coach. Can you explain this transition?

As a player, it is important to be aggressive–your body language is very critical. But as coach, it is important to do whatever is needed for the player. There is already so much pressure on them. Your mindset and body language should not add to it. If you are tense, it adds to the tension of the player.

Q. You have often had to play the role of a headmaster, ensuring discipline among your wards. What has been your funniest discovery?

People hiding things–biscuits, chocolates, phones–underneath the bedsheets. Then watching things and staying awake till late. As a sportsperson, it is not just important that you train well but also that you eat well, the time you rest and how you rest. I think as you become more professional, performance depends on these minor things.

Q. What needs to be done for India to become a top badminton-playing nation?

What we have done over the past 20 years has shown that Indians can win. But, structurally, we are far from being able to produce the best we can. The sport has boomed, the number of players has gone up, the support of the government has grown, and parents want their kids to take up sport as a career. Things have changed on the whole. Now it is important that we stitch these things together and ensure that the system is aligned, so that there is a pathway for the players to move to the top.

–with Shail Desai

IndiaContent

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FOOD & DRINK SPECIAL

THE GOOD LIFE

SPICE

INDIA TODAY

NOVEMBER 2021

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SPIRIT
TOP TRENDS IN THE INDIAN ALCO-BEV INDUSTRY

RYAN REYNOLDS

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, THE HOLLYWOOD ACTOR OPENS UP ABOUT SPICING THINGS ON NETFLIX, PANDEMIC ANXIETY AND HIS COMFORT CUISINE

Ryan Reynolds stars in *Red Notice* that released on Netflix this month

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

IT MAY SEEM A BIT REDUCTIVE, BUT LOOKING AT THE mountain of pandemic woes, if there was ever a need for life to imitate art then the past 20 months would have definitely benefitted from a Hollywoodesque superhero capable of outflanking Covid 19. In the absence of that possibility, Netflix's new flick ***Red Notice*** pulled off quite the casting coup with three superheroes in one film: The Rock (Dwayne Johnson), ***Deadpool*** (Ryan Reynolds) and ***Wonder Woman*** (Gal Gadot). While ***Red Notice*** saw the biggest opening weekend ever for a Netflix film with a massive 148,720,000 hours viewed around the world, we got the star of the film, Ryan Reynolds, to feature on our cover and an exclusive interview with *Spice.*

For Reynolds, who is also a writer and producer, there is no conflict between the big screen and streaming platforms anymore. "Audiences have a fidelity to the stories they want to see, not necessarily the venue in which they see it," he says. Apart from sharing his experience of shooting a blockbuster film during a pandemic, he also talks about his issues with mental health, and his favourite comfort food, recalling his special affinity for naan and butter chicken that goes back to his life growing up in multi-cultural Vancouver, in Canada.

In keeping with the matinee mood, for fans of The Oscar winning, all-time movie classic ***The Godfather***, *Spice* brings back postcard experiences in true Hollywood style from Francis Ford Coppola's Winery in Sonoma—a theme park extravaganza with two pools, bocce ball courts, a marketplace, and two restaurants. On a hedonistic trail of California's famed ménage à trois of food, wine and nature, we go wine tasting, dine in starred restaurants and take up residence in some of the most picturesque heritage chateaus in the famed vineyards of Napa and Sonoma. These restaurants don't just conjure up memorable food and provide flawless service in a unique setting, they also serve as models of sustainability; they have their own organic farms, even vineyards and their own artisanal pottery makers too.

Dazzled and pampered by the superlative food and wines, *Spice's* food fiesta stops for a quick layover in New York City where we spend 24 gourmet hours exploring a short list of more formal and celebratory dining options. From Keith McNally's masterpiece Balthazar in SoHo, whose golden-hued dining room is equal parts perfect French bistro and celebrity trap, to cocktails in Pastis in the edgy Meatpacking district to the high energy, familiar food, curated service, and alluring décor of Nobu Fifty Seven.

This food and drink special also provides a breezy walk through some of the legendary bars in our own country. From the Polo Bar at Rambagh Palace in Japiur—the first licensed bar in the state of Rajasthan—to the sublime beauty of Amrit Sagar, at The Lake Palace in Udaipur, to WILSON's—THE PUB at the Lalit Great Eastern, Kolkata. The Great Eastern Hotel is a landmark in world hotel history—started in 1840 by David Wilson, a baker from Herefordshire, this was Asia's first luxury hotel.

These storied bars provide a spirited canvas for the burgeoning Indian beverage industry that has seen the most action since Independence just in the last decade. From a shy consumer to an aggressive player internationally with world-class production facilities and local wines and spirits and indigenous labels conquering markets and winning medals worldwide. *Spice* examines the home-grown trends and even trendier labels inspired by local ingredients and sensibilities. This growing colossus may just be the local superhero we need.

(Aroon Purie)

INDIA TODAY

BREAKING NEWS

JUST A TAP AWAY

9:41
INDIA TODAY
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LOK SABHA 2019

Narendra Modi Live: By Congress-mukt India we will fulfil Gandhi's dream

PM Narendra Modi was speaking in Lok Sabha

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World Gourmand cookbook Award winning author of 40 books, including India's first city-restaurant guide and the world's first *Vegetarian Guide to Paris*. She was also the first Income Tax commissioner to study journalism, law, management, and even gastronomy in Paris. Trained at the BBC, she has presented several international food shows. Singh has also been honoured by the French government.

2. SANDEEP ARORA

He is the country's pioneering Whisky and Spirits ambassador. Arora is also the consulting editor, Whisky Magazine, UK and the director of Spiritual Luxury Living, India's premiere spirits marketing advisory firm. He is also the only Indian judge on World Whisky Awards, UK and also heads Icons of Whisky, the only Global Spirit Awards in India.

3. SUVIR SARAN

Cookbook author, public speaker, farm advocate, chef, and restaurateur, Suvir Saran helmed Devi in New York City—the first Indian restaurant in America to receive a Michelin Star. He is also the chair of the Asian arm of the Culinary Institute of America. He is the only chef on the Nutrition Advisory Board at Brigham and Women's Hospital, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. He is currently working on a project in Central Delhi and his fourth book Instamatic was launched by Milap Publications in 2020.

4. RUPALI DEAN

Awarded the 'Best Food Writer' in the country' by the Indian culinary forum, WACS and the ministry of Tourism, Rupali Dean is a trained hospitality professional from the Institute of Hotel Management, a nutritionist and a former chef. She has also pursued food photography and a writing course from the Champagne region in France.

5. MAGANDEEP SINGH

Magandeep Singh is a peripatetic gastronome and hedonist who will swim, bike, and run to his next worthy meal and drink. When not trying to learn a new language, diving or DJing, he tries to get some work done. He remains unapologetic about his decadent choices.

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PHOTOGRAPH Guy Aroch / Trunk Archive

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देश का नं. 1
हिंदी न्यूज़ ऐप

जुड़े रहिए हर खबर से,
कहीं भी, कभी भी

अभी डाउनलोड करें

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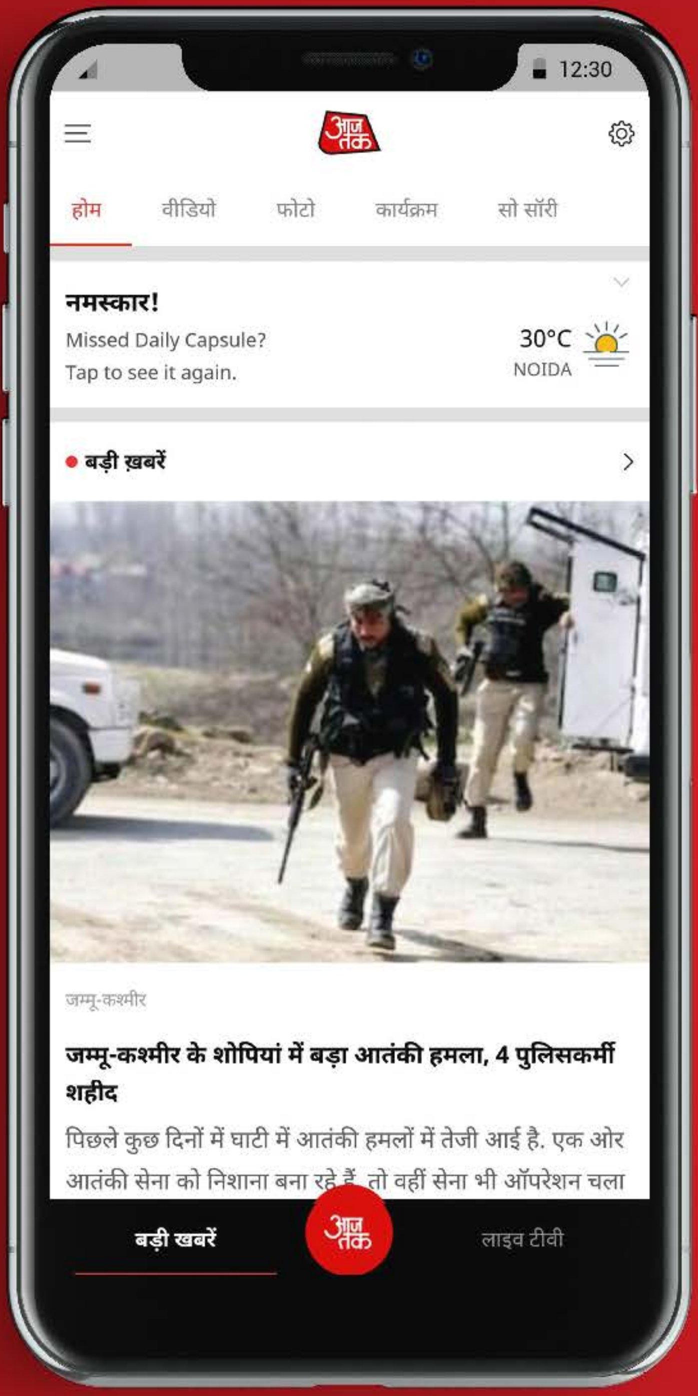
उपलब्ध है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होम
वीडियो
फोटो
कार्यक्रम
सो सॉरी
30°C
NOIDA
बड़ी ख़बरें
बड़ी खबरें
लाइव टीवी

नमस्कार!
Missed Daily Capsule?
Tap to see it again.

जम्मू-कश्मीर

जम्मू-कश्मीर के शोपियां में बड़ा आतंकी हमला, 4 पुलिसकर्मी शहीद

पिछले कुछ दिनों में घाटी में आतंकी हमलों में तेजी आई है. एक ओर आतंकी सेना को निशाना बना रहे हैं, तो वहीं सेना भी ऑपरेशन चला

THE GREEN SURGE

"What's in a name?" you may wonder, and be part of august company with the mighty bard. But when it comes to uncut emeralds, naming gems is a tradition reserved only for the most rare and remarkable ones. With Chipembele, the rhino emerald, Gemfields introduces its largest high-quality emerald yet, discovered at the Kagem emerald mine in Zambia.

Although no official record exists, it is estimated that not more than a couple of dozen gemstones have ever been given their own names. Chipembele, which means 'rhino' in the local indigenous dialect of Bemba, weighs 7,525 carats (1,505g), and therefore earned a name to match its giant size. Kagem emerald mine, in Zambia, is the world's single largest producing emerald mine and is owned by Gemfields in partnership with the Zambian government's Industrial Development Corporation. This magnificent stone is due to be sold at the next Gemfields emerald auction, with viewing already started from early this month. The winning bidder for Chipembele will be given the option of a unique DNA nano-tag identity, ensuring that the cut and polished gems that it yields can be identified and certified as having originated from this extraordinary gemstone. Clearly, the power of provenance prevails.

–By Chumki Bharadwaj

Whimsical indulgence

Imagine the dance of striped water colours with gold and platinum elements on a plate of cheese. Now that's what you call a sensorial delight. Such is the visual glory of the Christian Lacroix collection by Vista Alegre. Dinner sets with handmade decorations in gold and platinum summon the luxury of fine things to your table even if the food isn't that inspiring.
Price on request;
Availability
The House of Things
www.thehouseofthings.com

Lights Unlimited

Lamps are the easiest way to introduce drama in your home. Designed by Carlo Colombo, Glo is an iconic collection of glass spheres that add glamour and mystique effortlessly.
Price on request;
Availability Sources Unlimited
info@sourcesunlimited.co.in

Quaint Charm

These Kilim cushions inspired by the flat-weave tapestry traditionally made in Persia and Turkey are a gorgeous mix of geomety and earthy shades. GharGhar lends it a contemporary twist by using modern hues that make it dynamic.
Price ₹1,300 -1,500 per cushion;
Availability https://www.gharghar.in

Rustic Delight

Even if you don't have a country home, there's no reason you can't have home accents that help you live your bucolic fantasy. This classic-style fireplace mantel by Anil Shahi is made of teakwood and is a clever rendition with its lovely green and off-white rustic finish.
Price on request;
Availability https://www.shahifurnishers.com

HOTSHEET

PICK OF THE MONTH

Bling Fling

The frosty allure of well-cut diamonds is the perfect accessory for the winter months. These gorgeous Bi-Triangle Drop diamond earrings from Faith by ASM are the perfect statement piece to sport from boardroom to brunch. What's more, the brand focusses on ethical sourcing of all their natural diamonds, so it promises to sate your conscience too.

Price ₹1,97,691; **Availability** https://faithbyasm.com

The Good Life

Tis that time of year when the season is spirited and the weather bracing. There's no better time to enjoy Belvedere Vodka's India-inspired limited edition holiday-season festive pack. Perfect for gifting or even just to make your own evenings more gratifying.

Price ₹3,735 (Delhi); ₹6,309 (Mumbai); **Availability** Select outlets across Delhi, Gurgaon and Mumbai

BELVEDERE
BELVEDERE
VODKA
POLAND
BELVEDERE
FESTIVE
VODKA
produced from
POLISH RYE

RARE SCENTS
EAU DE PARFUM
CKC
CORUNDUM

Shining Bright

It's rare when a 150-year old heritage luxury jewellery brand forays into the perfume market. No wonder then the fragrance portfolio is christened Rare Scents. Sample the Corundum from C. Krishniah Chetty, which invokes leafy, woody and musky notes.

Price Corundum (100 ml) ₹,9999;

Availability www.ckcjewellers.com/ (from November 15, 2021)

Winter Glow

The White Ginseng Radiance Refining Mask is an in-shower gel mask, from Korean brand Sulwhasoo that simply melts into the skin to remove dead cells and reveal the softer side to your complexion. Claimed to be powered by the goodness of natural white ginseng, it holds about 14 per cent moisture.

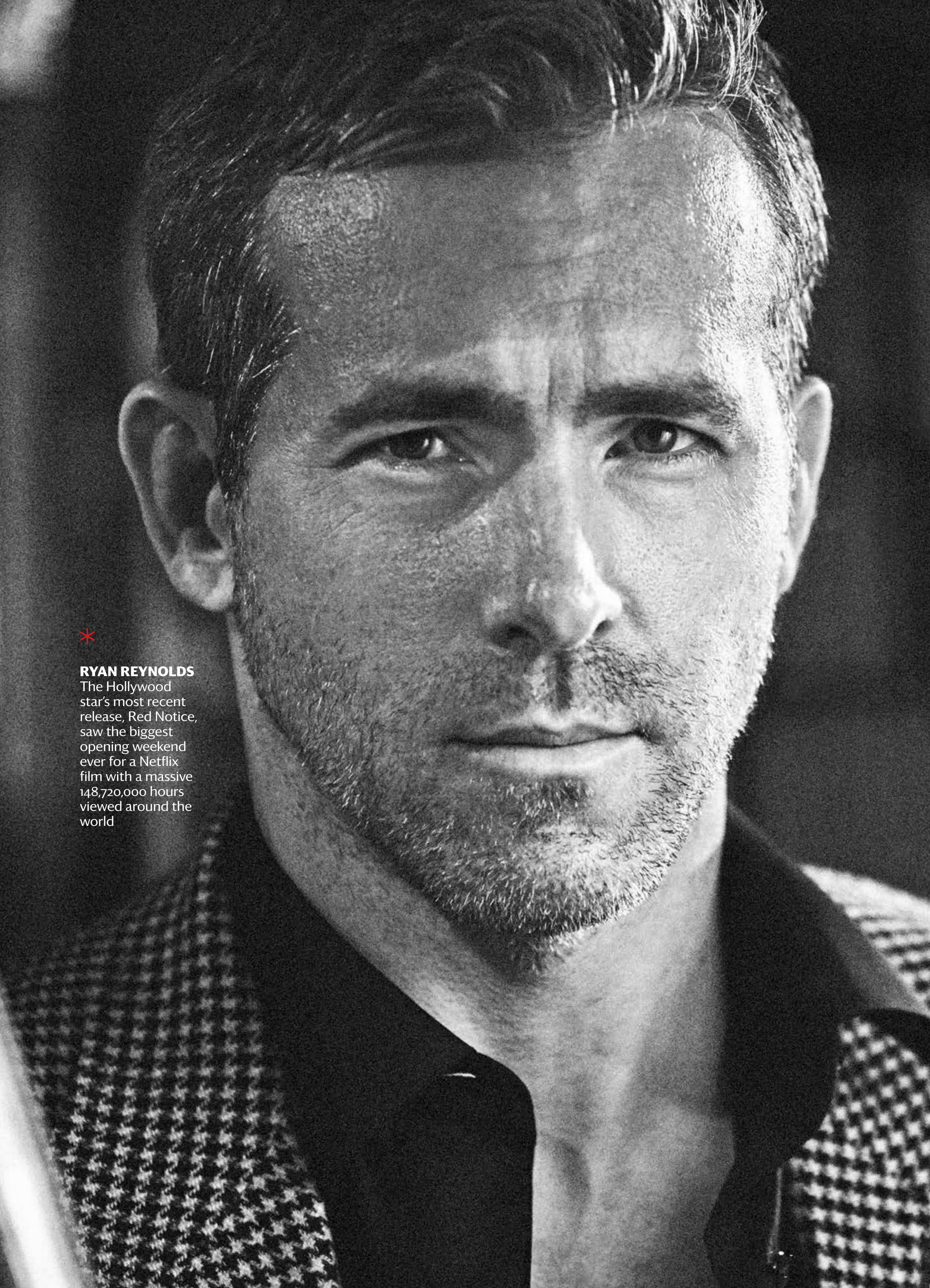
Price ₹4,950 (120ml); **Availability** www.nykaa.com

ROYAL SALUTE
BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY
21
YEARS OLD
THE SIGNATURE BLEND
THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE

Alchemy of Desire

Magic is a matrix that conflates timing, talent and skill. It's an art well known to distillers who use time as a rite of passage to drum up magic in drams. Royal Salute is the ultimate gift of provenance and time-tested craftsmanship that delivers exceptionally aged Scotch whisky, starting where others end, at 21 years old. For all those who feel the urge to nudge their whisky experience up a notch need not look further. It's also known as the 'King of Gifts' since it was created in 1953 as a gift for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Royal Salute 21-Year-Old Signature Blend comes not just with its signature taste but also with an enviable royal legacy. Imbued with a deep gold amber colour, the 21 YO brings rich, fruity aromas along with the sweet fragrance of autumn flowers on the nose. It summons the scent of sweet pears and citrus fruits along with a dry oakiness that is enhanced with the subtle notes of sherry and smoke. The fruity flavours invoke a medley of spices with hazelnuts before the rich, long, lingering finish takes over the mood and the palate.

Price Upwards of ₹13,900 (price varies as per state-wise tax regulations); **Availability** Retail Stores



RYAN REYNOLDS
The Hollywood star's most recent release, Red Notice, saw the biggest opening weekend ever for a Netflix film with a massive 148,720,000 hours viewed around the world

“YOU WOULDN’T HAVE TO BEND MY ARM TO GO TO INDIA FOR A PROMOTIONAL TOUR”

RYAN REYNOLDS, ACTOR

ACTOR RYAN REYNOLDS ON HIS MOST RECENT NETFLIX OUTING, RED NOTICE, PANDEMIC ANXIETY AND HIS AFFINITY FOR BUTTER CHICKEN AND NAAN.

By SUHANI SINGH

PHOTOGRAPH: GUY AROCH / TRUNK ARCHIVE

Hollywood has thrived on the disaster genre. A hero, often white, overcomes gargantuan odds to save the world from eternal doom. In the Covid-19 pandemic though, the industry faced a disaster of epic, unprecedented proportions. A one-man army was not enough to tackle it. The film industry the world over has had to adapt and innovate to survive. Professionals embraced streaming platforms as a viable medium to share their art. In 2021 alone, Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Lawrence, Zendaya, Jake Gyllenhaal have all done a Netflix film. Ryan Reynolds jumped on to the streaming bandwagon back in 2019 with *6 Underground* (also on Netflix). More recently, the actor appeared on the SVOD (special video-on-demand) service again alongside Dwayne Johnson and Gal Gadot in the heist thriller, *Red Notice*. If you want a sense of how big the streaming revolution is, it can’t get any bigger than Netflix bringing The Rock, *Deadpool* and *Wonder Woman* together.

For Reynolds, who is also a writer and a producer, there is no conflict between the big screen and streaming platforms anymore. “Audiences have a fidelity to the stories they want to see, not necessarily the venue in which they see it,” he says. “There is something spectacular about the in-theatre experience but there’s also something wonderful about being able to enjoy a marquee movie or blockbuster film in your living room.”

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Reynolds was working on *Red Notice* when the pandemic brought shooting to a halt. Work

PHOTOGRAPH: GUY AROCH / TRUNK ARCHIVE

*

TOP OF THE CHARTS
One of the most affable stars in Hollywood, Ryan Reynolds has over 39 million followers on Instagram

resumed only after seven months. Reynolds recalled the first scene he shot after the disruption. When Johnson's character enquires: "What are you staring at?" Reynolds says, "Nothing. You just look seven months older." While the scene didn't make the final cut for Reynolds, the improvisation was his cheeky way to highlight the oddity of the situation. The crew wore shields and face masks which meant the on-set atmosphere lacked "the camaraderie and familial feeling". "You didn't have a deeper connection as you would have before," he added.

Reynolds though hasn't had any trouble establishing a connection with his audiences. On Instagram he has over 39 million followers who love the banter he has with his actress-wife Blake Lively (*Gossip Girl*) and his frenemity with actor Hugh Jackman. He has delighted in romantic comedies (***Definitely, Maybe*** or ***The Proposal***); impressed in dramas (***Buried***, ***Mississippi Grind***) and expanded his legion of fans with ***Deadpool***, an action comedy franchise about a snarky superhero. One of the most affable stars in Hollywood, his production company, Maximum Effort, was one of the first to start a diversity and inclusion programme which committed to hiring BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of colour) and other marginalised people on its projects. That's not all. Reynolds will join efforts to help find a lost teddy bear in Vancouver, will sportingly wear a gaudy sweater to shoot a video promo to raise funds for a children's hospital and address his fans in India with a video message, even if it is to promote a film (***Free Guy***). "If you're wondering whether Hollywood is just mimicking Bollywood, well, the answer is yes. We are shameless." The remark, Reynolds says, stems from

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

LIVE TO EAT OR EAT TO LIVE?
A little bit of both

FAVOURITE CUISINE
Japanese

FAVOURITE COMFORT FOOD
Sourdough bread

FAVOURITE RESTAURANT IN NEW YORK
Pearl Oyster Bar

FAVOURITE INDULGENCE
I'm a bit of a sugar junkie

Photograph: SHUTTERSTOCK

ARE YOU A FAN OF INDIAN FOOD?
"As a kid I grew up in Vancouver which prides itself on offering a tremendous variety of cultures. As a family we used to eat at the Indian restaurant Nirvana. Naan bread and butter chicken is up there for me."

ON WORKING WITH DWAYNE JOHNSON AND GAL GADOT

"They have this superpower, which is the ability to laugh at themselves. And that's a superpower you definitely cannot underestimate. I don't think Dwayne would be the global superstar he is if he didn't have that sense of humour. It's the same with Gal. We had a lot of fun just laughing and making stuff up in the moment."

*

MATINEE MOMENTS
Reynolds in a photographic still from the movie *Red Notice*

COURTESY: NETFLIX

AVIATION
AMERICAN GIN
BATCH DISTILLED

SPIRITED Reynolds owns a stake in Aviation Gin, which was acquired by Diageo in 2020

PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY

his appreciation for the "tremendous amount of joy" that Bollywood films have infused into them.

COVID ADJUSTMENTS

Reynolds is also one of the few stars not afraid to share his vulnerability. The actor has spoken up about his battle with anxiety. Reynolds is well aware of how the pandemic can alleviate it for those already afflicted and be a trigger for others. "I know how nuanced and challenging anxiety can be," says Reynolds. "And I am also very conscious that the way I experience it and the way it manifests in me wouldn't be the same for others. The darker moments in my life were when I internalised it too much. Talking about my experience has allowed me to make friends with it to a certain degree and feel far less alone than you initially thought."

The pandemic also presented an opportunity for Reynolds and Lively to showcase their philanthropic side. The duo donated a million to Feeding America and Food Bank Canada, with Reynolds chipping in to help the government of British Columbia, Canada, where he was born and raised before he left for Los Angeles to realise his dreams to be an actor. "We are very lucky and fortunate to be in a position where we can help," he says. "It allows me to really enjoy my position in a much richer way while also raising others, sharing wealth and power and stepping up to whatever is needed."

As he continues those efforts, he's stepping back from films at least until summer next year to spend time with his three young daughters. "I am just trying to create a little bit more space for my family and spend time with them," he said at the premiere of ***Red Notice*** recently. "You don't really get that time back. It just gives me an opportunity to be home." That doesn't mean you won't see Reynolds. Ever so prolific, he finished shooting two films— ***Spirited*** with Will Ferrell and ***The Adams Project*** with Mark Ruffalo and Jennifer Garner— which will release in 2022. There are other roles to play, that of a football club owner (Welsh club Wrexham AFC) and an entrepreneur. Reynolds has stakes in cellular service Mint Mobile Green and Aviation Gin, which was acquired by Diageo in 2020. Reynolds would love to bring Aviation to India. "You wouldn't have to bend my arm to go to India for a promotional tour," he says. "It would be a dream job."

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THE CUP RUNNETH OVER

Raising a toast to the soaring spirits of the beverage industry in India.

By **MAGANDEEP SINGH**

The Indian beverage industry has seen the most action since Independence just in this last decade. We have gone from being a shy consumer to an aggressive player internationally: world-class production facilities, local wines and spirits raking in the medals on a global stage, and indigenous labels conquering markets and categories worldwide. It started with wine when a spate of young brands decided to change the way wine was presented and consumed in India. The affordable-but-sippable revolution that Sula started was furthered by brands like York, Fratelli and even Grover's (in its new incarnation) while, at the same time, boutique brands like KRSMA showed us that it is indeed possible to make world class wines on Indian soils.

The Gin & Tonic Craze

This was just the start for what came next was truly colossal. Nobody thought young India would embrace gin and tonic the way they did for, even though, historically speaking, India was the birthplace of the drink, the cocktail had never really ventured beyond the armed services' clubs. The new wave was quickly fuelled by a plethora of indigenous gin brands, many of them based out of Goa. These brands went beyond the standard London Dry as they creatively exploited all permutations of Indian botanicals, thus bringing regional kitchens into the limelight. Terai played with a delicate balance of basil and fennel in a rice-based spirit, Hapusa pushed the limits with Himalayan juniper while others like Stranger & Sons packed in a heady mix of spices and a unique mix of citrus peels. But this gin-volution wouldn't have had the same impact if their launch hadn't been supplemented with the advent of local tonic water brands. Svami, Sepoy & Co., Vaum, Jade Forest, the list is growing even as we put it together here. These tonics too didn't stop at the standard stuff, incorporating flavours and finding new ways to reduce calories without compromising on flavour. All in all, even when sticking with Indian brands, the possible G+T combinations can run into hundreds!

HAPUṢĀ
HIMALAYAN
750 ml DRY • GIN 42.8% v/v
Alc by Vol
HANDCRAFTED IN INDIA
ह • पु • षा

moonshine
moonshine
moonshine
moonshine

SIQERA
JAMUN
perry

Other Spirits...

However, as 2021 winds down, the gin-fever seems to be simmering down. But that doesn't ring true for others as new entrants on the scene include rums (light and slightly aged), which are starting to garner attention. And these rums are priced at a premium, often made in pot-stills and with ingredients better than molasses so they truly outshine all that came before. Makazai makes some quaffable stuff, Two Indies' by Amrut is a solid contender for my current favourite, and then there is Segredo Aldeia, which also does a unique café rum that is more liqueur than spirit, and makes for an unusual digestif. Even while this category is finding its footing, other players are rallying ahead, betting on hitherto untried categories, Pistola pure agave spirit (think, Mezcal) will launch soon, joining Desmondji's versions which had long gone unnoticed on Goan shelves. There is talk of making brandies (Sula did launch Janus quiet some time back and little has been heard of it since), Vermouths (I recently tried the Vinicola version in Goa and came away pleasantly surprised), aperitifs and other fruit-based distillates.

SEPOY&Co
ORIGINAL GINGER ALE
INDIAN TONIC WATER
HIBISCUS TONIC WATER
ELDERFLOWER TONIC WATER
MINT TONIC WATER
SPICED GRAPEFRUIT TONIC WATER

...And Ferments

Speaking of fruit-based, even ferments are going big; Fruzzante leads the pack with great wines and spritzers. They also make a honey-based dessert wine, Ark, something I advise buying and stocking as it improves upon ageing. And honey is a good segue into mead, which is finding its own footing. Although many microbreweries do dabble in it, Moonshine is our first commercially-bottled brand with one version that is so rare and precious that it sells only through pre-orders. Apple cider is another category to look out for and Siqera rules for the moment, although new entrants working with fresh Himalayan produce are poised to hit shelves soon.

For Sobriety's sake

Not all the growth in the beverage space has come from alcohol; an equally big demand is driving the 0% space. From the mixers mentioned above to others like non-alcoholic rum and cola (by Svami), Not Old Fashioned (by Kati Patang), Gingerales, ginger beers (by Gunsberg) and many brands of cocktail-ready pre-mixes, these are some curiosities that, although still in need of fine-tuning, are definitely showing up at parties more often.

KATI PATANG
NOT
COSMOPOLITAN
NON ALCOHOLIC CRAFT SELTZER
KATI PATANG
NOT
GIN & TONIC
NON ALCOHOLIC CRAFT SELTZER
KATI PATANG
NOT
OLD FASHIONED
NON ALCOHOLIC CRAFT SELTZER

Paul John
Indian Single Malt
BRILLIANCE
BOLD
46%
PEATED SINGLE MALT WHISKY
NON - CHILL FILTERED

Penny wise, premium category

The range of pricing is the most interesting aspect of this market, which starts at the competitively-priced to the approachable-yet-premium and then going all the way to luxury, which ensures that, irrespective of buying power, there is always something to serve all levels of curiosities. Going ahead, as legislations ease and attitudes relax towards the production and distribution of beverages (alcoholic or otherwise), the world's largest (and youngest) democracy is now poised to 'vote' for what may soon become some of the most consumed brands of drinks on the planet. And yes, unlike regular elections, this one promises to be one helluva' party!

24 CULINARY HOURS IN NEW YORK CITY

Take a bite out of the Big Apple with Spice as we explore some great options to brunch, lunch, munch and make merry.

By **SUVIR SARAN**

*

NEVER SKIP BREAKFAST
Eating at Balthazar is as much tradition as it is a treat

In the twenty-plus years I lived in the States, I saw New York City become a leading dining destination. Go to Manhattan, Queens, Bronx, Brooklyn or Staten Island, and you will discover wonderful dining options that bring you the foods of the world without taking too much from your wallet. Here are restaurants that take the business of food seriously but not themselves so seriously that they forget that hospitality is about bringing a joyous moment to the lives of their customers. Fun dining is what I call those gourmand experiences where one can indulge without having the need for superfluous fuss, white-glove service, tablecloths and under-liners, chargers, and a setting of cutlery that would have been out of place even in Medieval times. Hopefully we shall see more restaurants cutting the expenses that add nothing to the experience qualitatively and instead investing in details that make food comforting and memorable while also good for people and the planet's health and well-being.

In this short list, I share more formal and celebratory dining options that serve the NYC story of maturity, longevity, and sturdiness. At a time when businesses are stretched to the maximum, where consumers and chefs are both chasing and providing cleverly cloaked poison labelled as comfort food, I found these jewels that are still able to give you an experience to share that is special and charming, memorable, and refined, even exciting and delicious, and always served with thoughtful service. These aren't restaurants just bringing you food; they are doing what restaurants have done forever—serving experiences that taste delicious today and that will be rich moments to cherish in happy flashbacks culled from memory's kitchen.

MORANDI
MORANDI

IMAGE COURTESY: Michael Grimm

IMAGE COURTESY: Michael Grimm

BALTHAZAR Breakfast

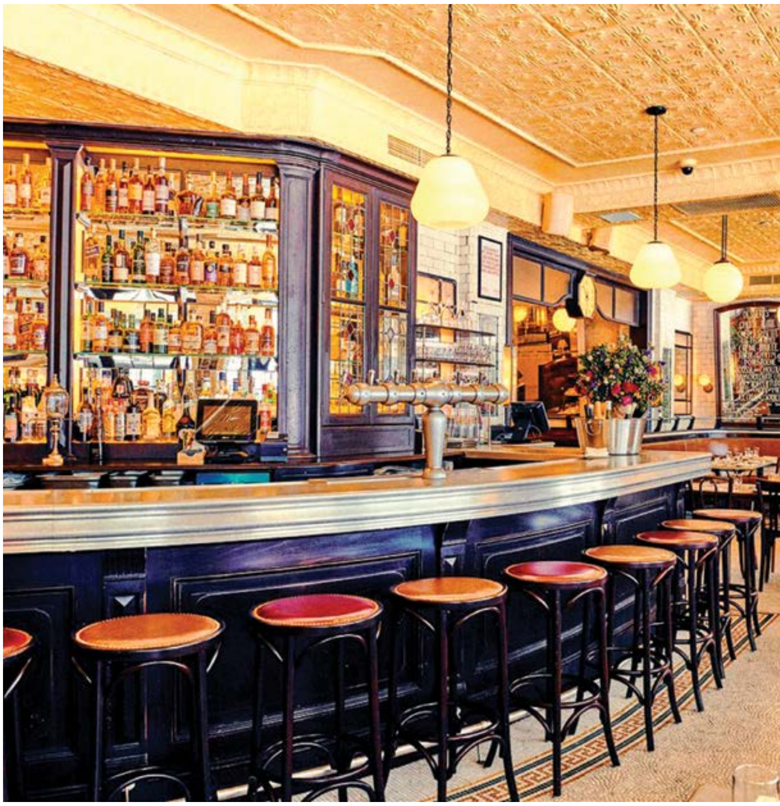
Balthazar, the most remarkable French bistro in SoHo, is the Keith McNally masterpiece that had the New York Times calling him "the man who discovered downtown." Step into its golden-hued dining room and you walk into a world that is equal parts perfect bistro and celebrity trap. I love it at all times of the day. The Absolute Best Sticky Buns in NYC make breakfast or brunch at Balthazar a sealed deal. Evocative of a Parisian brasserie with NY chic and style, here you find omelet with herbs, steak tartare, and the absolute best and most ceremoniously served raw bar selections meeting your lips with just about any cocktail you might want from their gorgeous smoke-stained full bar. I love having Lillet Blanc muddled with several slices of orange and served on rocks; the seductively scented Boulevardier, made with bourbon, sweet vermouth and Campari is another great choice. Steak frites—yes you are reading it right—is that forbidden indulgence that will make the fruit most fetching and appropriately indulged. Here, enjoying your breakfast, order tartines, fresh doughnuts, apple galette, or cinnamon buns. Get an assortment of pastries and appreciate why the bakery at Balthazar is NY establishment.

bar
vini e cucina
caffe

MORANDI Lunch

Morandi, a casual Italian restaurant in the always chic and charming Greenwich Village in downtown Manhattan, is the brainchild of Francophile restauranteur Keith McNally. There is something gutturally brilliant in the design, layout, light, and colours at his restaurants. They make you feel you are transported to locales where life is free of stress and packed with joy. Morandi, with its close ceiling and buffed brick walls, makes you feel as if you are dining in a busy and densely populated quarter in a walled city of yore. Morandi is remarkable for providing a comfort to diners that comes without the use of analogous ingredients, faddish substitutions, or popular trends. The salty frito misto with crunchy fresh head-on-shrimp and the crispy artichokes, served with their stalks as they are in Rome, are a joyful treat. The Pice al Limone and Cacio e Pepe are proof of the importance of top quality products, no matter how simple they are, to the enjoyment of food. Desserts as old as time, but made with love, are served with pride and enjoyed with glee. Come to Morandi and escape to romantic Rome without leaving NYC.

IMAGE COURTESY: Evan Sung



PHOTOGRAPH BY: Louise Palmberg

PASTIS Cocktails (evening or late night)

There is something genius about the use of subway tiles in a restaurant. Pastis, with its timeless feel and a bar that is the shining star of the restaurant design, takes us back a hundred years or more through very minutely envisioned, planned, and painstakingly executed construction. I associate this restaurant as part of my coming of age in New York City. It was Pastis' opening in the then edgy and seedy Meatpacking district that turned that bloody and smelly butcher's corridor into an haute fashion corridor. I urge you to visit Pastis for a long cocktail hour, enjoying French fries that could not be crisper, warmer, or more perfect than they are, with an overindulgence of bountiful offerings from the sea. Whether sipping rosé with oysters in the warmer months, or a negroni with fries—yes you are reading correctly—eating at Pastis is as cinematic and memorable an experience as any. Come for champagne and something sweet after dinner and you will have a celestial ending to your day made more fantastical by the reflective mosaic flooring that transports you right to the gilded age.

PHOTOGRAPH BY: Jason Varney

ASTIS APERITIF

*

EVENING GLORY Pastis is great for a long cocktail hour or even champagne and something sweet post dinner

PHOTOGRAPHS BY: Suvir Saran

NOBU FIFTY SEVEN **Dinner**

At Nobu Fifty Seven, food and architecture unite in a layering and folding visual vocabulary inspired by the ocean and Japanese fishing villages. It takes a lot to bring a downtown boy to tourist-trap Midtown, and here the warm walnut wood beckons diners from the street into the calm of the bar. The rippling floor pattern references the ocean, and the bar top appears to float on glowing onyx like bobbing driftwood. It is this sensibility of sensuality, layered in discovery that makes you want to be at Nobu Fifty Seven. Peruvian flavors float into the Japanese mainstay, and sweet with sour and just enough heat keeps everything finding easy acceptance by all. This first uptown location of Chef Nobu Matsuhisa has walls and columns that are sheathed in shingles styled after Japanese native houses. The abalone shell chandelier floats above like a school of fish cornered by waves. The design marries the two-floor space rather seamlessly with a welcoming and warm ambience. It is easy to start thinking of savouring and indulging in creamy spice sauce with tempura, miso with cod, and jalapeno with yellowtail. Today these are ubiquitous, but Nobu began serving them in his signature style of perfection before any other. Nobu Fifty Seven, conducted and orchestrated under the operating savvy of the restaurant empresario Drew Nieporent, is a bustling NYC spot that brings the diner a perfect marriage of high energy, familiar food, curated service, and alluring decor.

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NOBU FIFTY SEVEN Food and architecture unite to unfold a visual vocabulary, inspired by the ocean and Japanese fishing villages

Wine, Dine, Eat, Sleep, Repeat

California at its multi sensorial, immersive, sunshine-drenched and flamboyant best. Indulge in true Hollywood-style fun fiesta.

By **RASHMI UDAY SINGH**

The stunning sunshine state that shamelessly struts around its vivid bounty of nature is not just about wine tasting, or dining in starred restaurants; it's also about sleeping in them... almost. If that got your attention, the next few pages are going to be gripping because here in California's wine country, the ménage à trois of food, wine and nature copulate to produce a realm of mind-blowing surprises. Here, nature not only conspires to produce the finest, plumpest flavour-packed vegetables, shiny-cheeked fruits and grapes but does so in partnership with the restaurants, in their backyards. Actually these are not just restaurants that conjure up memorable food and flawless service amid unique ambience but are also models of sustainability; they have their own organic farms, even vineyards and their own artisanal pottery makers too. So bespoke is each experience that in some, when you sleep in their inn (on top of the restaurant) your in-room breakfast includes Perigod black truffle omelettes, and Japanese breakfast too.

Along that stunningly beautiful drive (and drive you need to) wine lovers can stop for wine tasting in world-famous wineries to smaller family-run ones. Some offer the most stunning suites in its chateau as a crib for the night, while for fans of '*The Godfather*' series a special food and wine theme park at Francis Ford Coppola's winery.

I've been there, done that, sipped and supped, be it the wine regions of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Australia (each one replete with their own superlative charms) but none match California's immersively heady and delicious experiences. Go now! To quote the famous line from *The Godfather*: "I'm making you an offer you can't refuse."

Sharpen your taste buds, get your best dining jacket ready, your softest most comfy pyjamas to snooze in and yes, bring your wallet to the party, for these tasting menus are over-the-top expensive. But they offer great value-for-money. Also, remember to book well in advance. After all, we're on our way to an experience bordering on sensual heaven, and which infidel said that getting in to heaven was effortless?

FRENCH LAUNDRY

This has been the legendary bucket list celebration destination for the past 27 years. It is housed in a rustic river rock, timber, turn-of-the-century cottage (which used to house a steam laundry). It is here that maestro Thomas Keller reigns supreme, crowned the world's best, showered with countless stars and awards. We are thrilled that despite the pandemic, the service is flawless with consistent culinary perfection and the finest of wines.

We feast on the most artful delicious gems of wizardry: The all-time classic of tiny cones filled with a scoop of cool salmon tartare and a flute of champagne greets each diner.

The other classic which remains constant on the ever-changing menu is "Oysters and pearls"(sabayon of tapioca, oysters and caviar) melts and explodes with a haunting intensity. Its vegetarian version on my "vegetable menu" is par excellence as is the rest of the menu with grilled maitake mushrooms, stewed sweet peppers, Hawaii heart of peach and more. At an earlier dinner, six types of salt was served on the table with the finest foie gras-spun alchemy. The changing tasting menu always accommodates a fine balance between French and American, traditional and modern, refined and witty. And as always, unwavering consistency in flawless cooking and plating is a staple. That's what makes it the classic that it is.

Note: Plenty of charming inns to sleep in. The most recommended are Maison Fleurie, Lavender and Four Sisters.

Contact +1 707-944-2380; Cost $300 per person

* **THOMAS KELLER**
Crowned the world's best, this award-winning chef reigns supreme at French Laundry

HARBOR
HOUSE

SINGLE THREAD FARM & INN

Dazzled, pampered, and blown away for the second time by the three Michelin-starred Single Thread Farm & Inn. Sonoma county 's five-year-old jewel is source focussed, farm-driven labour of love by chef Kyle Connaughton and wife Katina who have lived and worked extensively in Japan and their team have an intuitive understanding of what their guests need and desire.

I love the way the farm (Katina Connaughton's domain) is integrated into the hospitality spaces and so flamboyantly on to tables. The menu changes with each micro season, offering only the freshest, finest produce from the local farms and their own in Sonoma County. From smoked Ora King Salmon with Arctic Char Roe and Myoga in Spring to delectable Pumpkin Tartare with Dungeness Crab and a Miso-Makrut Lime Foam in winter. The delicacies are cooked in authentic donabe (Japanese clay pot) cooking.

Sweet endings include Japanese cheesecake or a delicate snowfall of buttermilk-thyme sherbet. Every detail is thoughfully curated, from the moss and delicate flowers in the amuse-bouche to the parting gifts of heirloom seeds. Not only is Single Thread Farm on the World's 50 Best list but it was also awarded the first green Michelin star for sustainability. A word to the wise: Book ahead to stay in the suites on top of the restaurant. This is true-blue luxury not only to wine and dine at the superlative restaurant but also to totter up and dreamily roll into bed only to awaken to a gourmet breakfast. Bliss is a special on their menu!

Contact
+1 707-723-4646;
Cost $375 per person
(10-course tasting menu)

* **KYLE CONNAUGHTON WITH WIFE KATINA**
The couple own the five-year-old, three Michelin-starred Single Thread Farm & Inn in Sonoma county

HARBOUR HOUSE

From dusk to dawn, from breakfast to dinner... we feast on the brilliant chef Krammerer's highly original cuisine and revel in the easy leisurely pace of nature in the Michelin-starred Harbour House on Mendocino coast.

Here, luxurious hyper-local and foraged ingredients weave magic. Roasted peppers over cubes of tomato water geleé with smoky campfire butter make for an intriguing starter, while salmon glazed with apple syrup delivers a veritable kaleidoscope of flavours. For dessert, seaweed ice cream with bay nut, quince and shiso flaunts an ingenious union of sweet and savoury tastes. Spend a relaxed restful night in the attached inn to rise and shine to an amazing breakfast of the famed eggs; it's a memorable treat. And even more so is the easy walk to the ocean and feasting on the seaweed collected and conjured into masterpieces by the genius chef.

Contact +1 707-723-4646;
Cost $375 per person

JORDAN WINERY

The joys of Jordan winery include a blissed-out night and day in its luxurious heritage chateau suites and getting high on its sublime wines. This certified sustainable Sonoma winery's wines are a happy meeting ground of France and Sonoma: Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon and Jordan Chardonnay.

The 50-year-old family-run winery's magnificent suites are a class apart with the wooden beam ceilings, period furniture, chessboards to battle wits on and listening to music on vinyl records, every detail is perfect right up to the sumptuous breakfast on the flower-filled balcony, overlooking 1200 acres of rolling lands.

Expend any guilt calories strolling the sprawling acres of vegetable gardens tended to by maestro chef Todd knoll. Eating plump juicy peaches straight off the tree is an indescribable joy. The winery offers many a food and wine tasting option. I opted for the very unique Paris on the terrace, where I get to taste amazing, bursting-with-freshness and flavour dishes under the trees overlooking the vineyard, as we sip on Jordan wines of course. My only regret is that I couldn't meet the genius John Jordan as he had already flown off in his private jet. **Contact** (707) 431-5250; **Cost** US$ 45-135 per guest

OPUS ONE WINERY

The best of both worlds: France and California. When Baron Phillipe de Rothschild (best known member of the great wine-making family behind Bordeaux Chateau Mouton Rothschild) and Robert Mondavi (pioneer of the Napa valley) founded Opus One, they dreamt of giving birth to a legendary wine that would transcend generations. In honour of that dream, meticulous attention to detail is a driving component of the Opus One pursuit of the best possible fine wine. From swish tasting rooms, cellars to the lush vineyards and the finest of wines, a rigorous selection ensures only the best berries make their way into the fermentation tanks. Gravity flow ensures the gentle development of tannins and aromas. All-new French oak barrels, from a range of coopers, enables the maturation of a wine that balances elegance and power. As we continue to swirl, sniff, sip and spit we realise that time is revealed in Opus One by the character of each vintage: sometimes with a highly defined personality; other times with subtle, complex nuances. Similarly, time is of the essence as they respond to the vintage's climatic conditions because they dictate how they meticulously care for the vines and developing grapes. Opus truly owns the best of both worlds.

Word to the wise: Opus one is an experience ideal for anyone interested in a luxury wine tasting experience, which is elegant and serene. Not ideal for wine enthusiasts looking for a fast, boisterous, casual tasting experience or those wine lovers seeking out white wines, sweet wines, or a range of different wines.

Contact +1 (800) 292-6787,
+1 (707) 944-9442
Cost $60- 90 (tasting price) per person depending on the vintages chosen

* **MORGAN TAGESON** Leads the wine tasting at Opus One–founded by Baron Phillipe de Rothschild and Robert Mondavi

COPPOLA WINERY

Lights. Camera. Drink, Eat, Swim... The Oscar winning, all-time movie classic "*The Godfather's*" fans are in for multiple treats. In true Hollywood style, Francis Ford Coppola Winery is a theme park extravaganza with two pools, bocce ball courts, a marketplace, and two restaurants. It's a go to for movie buffs filled with movie memorabilia, from some of Coppola's Academy Awards to Don Corleone's desk from "*The Godfather*." And for oenophiles in love, Francis Ford Coppola Winery hosts weddings too, with guided wine tastings of course. Whether you're a big spender or looking for a great deal, there's a Family Coppola wine that will fit your needs. In his decades-long career, Coppola racked up 36 director credits. While this is an impressive tally, he has produced more than double that number of wines, offering a lineup of almost 80 varietals.

Lunching in his sun-dappled restaurant (overlooking the vineyards) and relishing his personal pantheon of recipes is a memoir-worthy memory. Especially his traditional Italian dishes, with an emphasis on family-style dishes that feature fresh, seasonal ingredients sourced from the property's organic herb and produce garden are extraordinary. Each dish is accompanied by a story. In Copolla's words: "When we began to develop the idea for this winery, we thought it should be like a resort, basically a wine wonderland; a place to for people of all ages who can enjoy the best things in life—food, wine, music, dancing, games, swimming and performances—a place to celebrate the love of life." And it delivers on its promise.

Contact +1 (707) 857-1471; **Cost** $18- 25 (tasting price) per person

CASUAL DINING IN NAPA VALLEY

Long gourmet tasting menus are a once-in-a-while treat. Most of the time it's the casual, comforting ones we head too that's easy on the wallet too. Napa valley offers a surprising number of choices, of restaurants, cafes and bakeries. I'm including only three; two are my Thomas Keller favourites.

ADHOC

Go to Ad Hoc for the casual (and inexpensive) experience offering from Thomas Keller of French Laundry. Opened as a temporary concept in 2006, it still magnetises diners with it's Ad Hoc Fried Chicken, braised short ribs and American comfort food from Keller's childhood. He can't resist his creative twist and at Ad Hoc, it came in the form of a sundae with Lucky Charms ice cream served with whipped cream and a pitcher of warm caramel sauce, and accompanied by kiss-shaped marshmallows and tiny squares of Rice Krispies candy. Must try!

Contact +1 707-944-2487;
Cost US$ 56 - 80

BOUCHON

Satisfying, and charming, my favorite brasserie has a branch in Los Angeles too (which has sadly shut during Covid). A must-visit restaurant that serves up (traditional) brasserie-style dishes, made with high-quality ingredients.

Bouchon's seasonal menu and raw bar selections change throughout the year, while staples like roast chicken, leg of lamb, and trout amandine remain as consistent, year-round favourites. Familiarity has a warm ring.

Contact yvinfo@bouchonbistro.com;
Cost US$ 21 - 100

RASHMI UDAY SINGH Dining at PRESS, where chef Philip Tessier weaves magic from local ingredients to spotlight the finest of Napa Valley cuisine

PRESS

Throbbing deliciously in the heart of lush wine country, PRESS delights. It spotlights the Napa Valley—the people, the ingredients, and the wines. For over 15 years PRESS has been drawing locals, winemakers, vintners, and guests from around the world to experience the best of Napa Valley. It is this sense of community that is at the heart of everything PRESS does. Chef Philip Tessier weaves magic from the finest local ingredients and highlights Napa Valley cuisine amid the beautiful sunlit ambience of the restaurant. Excellent service and fine wines make it the best way to taste and sip Napa.

Contact reservations@pressnapavalley.com;
Cost US$ 40 - 150

GETTING THERE

On offer: Amazing, affordable, hassle-free 20 seater JSX from Los Angeles to Oakland. It maps short flights only: LA to Concord Napa, or Oakland (near San Francisco). Walk into the plane 20 minutes before flight time. No hassle. Polite service; on time.

Driving your own car is always recommended. Plenty of per day hire cabs available too. Please plan carefully, google map in hand. After getting all your booking in place of course!

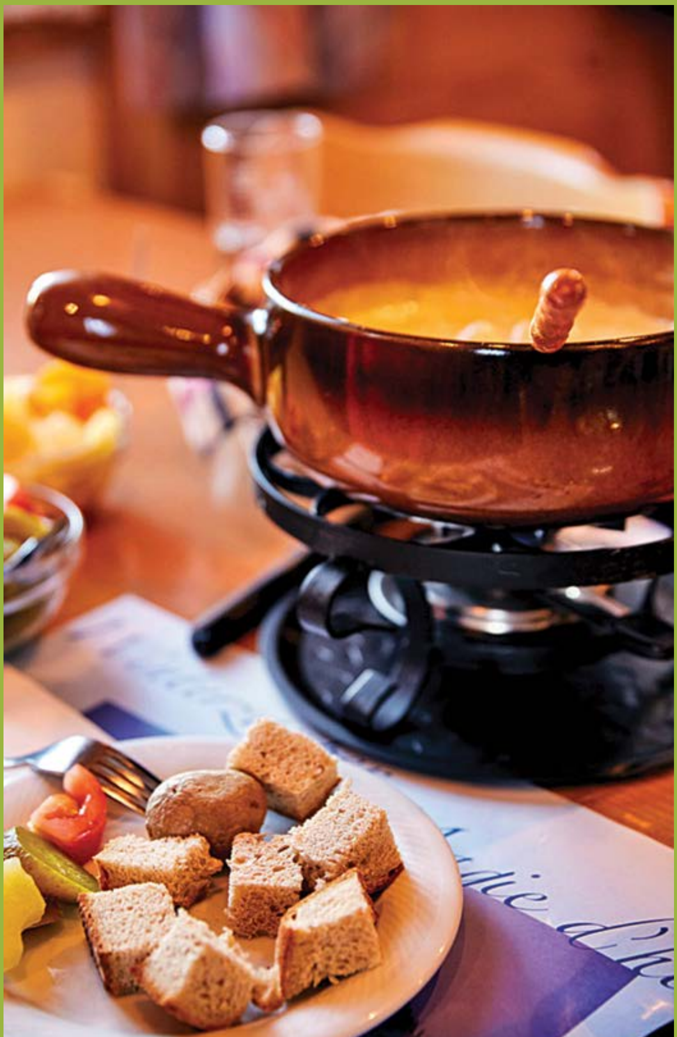
How to be a Green Gourmet

Celebrated the world over for its eco-friendly practices, Switzerland is a haven for the sustainable gourmand as well. Here's a guide to the art of mindful dining.

By **RUPALI DEAN**

Whether you come here to honour your fondue fandom, exult in the richness of Raclette potatoes as a rite of passage or simply to indulge the chocolate decadence, Switzerland is second to none when it comes to nature's bounty. It's incredible how easy and stress-free it is to eat wonderfully and wilfully in this country. After checking into the stunning Park Hyatt Zurich, I walk out in search for lunch and discover Haus Hiltl, which I am told is the oldest vegetarian restaurant in the world, dating back to 1898. To my surprise, I find quite a few (read over 100 Swiss Specialities) for vegetarians on the menu. I am not a vegetarian, and like me, more than 70 per cent of Hiltl's patrons are not really vegetarian, which speaks volumes of its stellar reputation. The menu is a triumph of nutrition, seasonal produce and excellent quality. It arrays a sustainable use of supplies and avoids wasting food, and does all that without compromising on palate pleasures, plating aesthetics or culinary skills. Sustainability is now a buzzword across the picture-perfect landscape of this 'YashRaj Films' staple.

The 19-yr-old organic restaurant in Zurich, Restau-



HILTL
CAFE
BAR
KOCHATELIER
SALON
RESTAURANT
HILTL
BAR

RESTAURANT
TÜFI

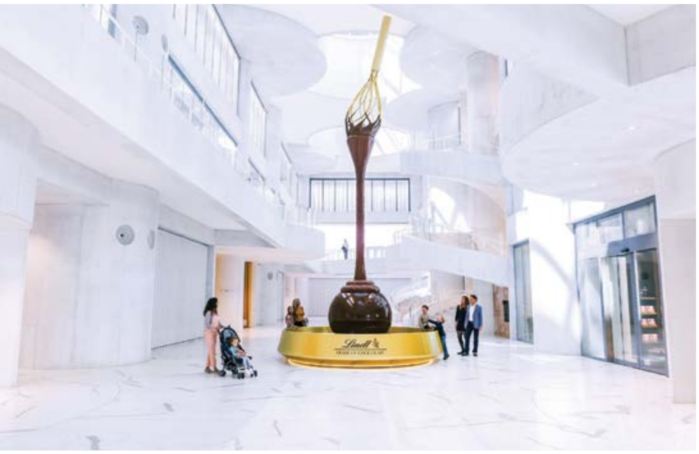
*

BOUNTY HUNTING Clockwise from top: Haus Hiltl, the oldest vegetarian restaurant in the world; Table layout at the 19-year-old organic restaurant, Tufi; Famed swiss fondue

rant Tüfi offers forgotten sensations, flavours from home and away, a host of colours, flavours and textures that will sweep you off on a fascinating culinary journey. The food is amazing, not lab invented, just plain food with a modern and creative twist, of course, but nothing that would make you feel uncomfortable. The food at this gourmet gem focusses entirely on seasonal offers and is committed to sustainability in food production with its nature-based cuisine. Out of conviction, the team here cooks as ecologically and regionally as possible. For their fresh-product kitchen, the chefs obtain most of the food from organic cultivation, while their meat comes from animals that have been kept in a natural and species-appropriate environment following the strictest animal husbandry guidelines in Switzerland. The fish also comes from local waters (wild caught).

Sustainable equals Swisstainable

Even at the Kempinski Hotel in Engelberg, the restaurant menu focusses on farm-to-table, relying on regional produce sourced from local traders with a number of vegetarian and even vegan options. Most chefs here promote local producers, which is then pooled together with culinary traditions and inspirations from across the globe.



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CULINARY GEMS Restaurant at the Kempinski in Engelberg (top); Lindt chocolate room (above)

While great food is a given, the kitchens at Kulm Hotel in St. Moritz are a visual delight too as well as a gourmet discovery. Headed by three-star Michelin chef Mauro Colagreco, The 'K' restaurant is stunningly perched at 6,000 feet above sea level inside one of Switzerland's most famous five-star hotels. The beautiful and sustainable K restaurant finds exceptional ways to breathe new life into traditional dishes. For instance, Chef Mauro's Nicoise salad uses mackerel instead of tuna in deference to the dwindling tuna populations; Tuna also has more metals/toxins than mackerel. Further, to lend a meaty taste in his pasta dish, he actually uses smoky tea to surprise the palate without actually using either meat or fish in it. Chef Mauro's exquisite and refined creations, seasoned to perfection adorn the restaurant's white-linen tables, drawing inspiration from the richness of the Mediterranean soil. Nature's bounty is at the very heart of all that he creates, using classical French cooking techniques.

The entire culinary landscape of this bountiful land echoes similar practices. In Lausanne, at the Auberge de l'Abbaye de Montheron, seasonal products are refashioned with a new look, sublimated by blending exotic flavours and surprising combination of foods rarely prepared together, such as crumble with autumn trumpets, lentils with a sauce of cenovis and thickened grapes and much more. Each day, even before entering the kitchen, chef Rafael Rodriguez's team meets neighbouring artisans and farmers who supply the bulk of fresh products used in the menu—vegetables, organic meats and artisanal, fish from Lake Geneva and even dairy products such as butter, cream, milk and yogurt.

Chefs here experiment, invent and bring back to life, culinary techniques from the middle ages in order to do

WHEN IN SWITZERLAND... Must Try

Cheese Fondue

Raclette in the Valais

Rösti aka A pancake made from grated potatoes, fried in hot butter

Älplermagronen Swiss-style Mac and Cheese with stewed apple on the side

Sweet Chestnuts Typically road-side snack

Chocolates Of Course

HEISSI M
Heissi Marroni
150 g. 5.50
200 g. 7.00
250 g. 8.50
300 g. 10.00
400 g. 13.50
500 g. 16.50

FINE THINGS
Clockwise from top left: Fondue; Raclette cheese; Alpermagronen; Chestnut; Rosti; Chocolate

justice to the history of the restaurant.

The cellar at Auberge de l'Abbaye de Montheron offers rare journeys that bridge the past of the Abbey of Montheron and the present viticulture in the Valais.

Mountian High

The Ferdinand, a current and chic restaurant located in CERVO Mountain Resort in Zermatt offers contemporary interiors juxtaposed with a spread of morish old-style Valais cuisine and definitely counts as one of the best places to try out Valais Raclette AOP.

Back at the Park Hyatt Zurich, Chef Tarik Lange at Parkhuus offers simplicity made elegant: the quintessence of Swiss cuisine. The best part: the balance of flavour and texture; the splendour of simplicity, and understated sensuality. Most of Parkhuus's dishes translate to a delightful homely palate on the primary level, with countless earthy tones, garnished with a hint of inventiveness served on a bed of beautiful ingredients. All in all, Swiss chefs today are just as concerned about a beautiful presentation, as they are about what goes into making the beauty and how to preserve it for posterity. After all, a thing of beauty is a joy forever. And a dynamic ecology will induce demand and provoke the markets to respond appreciatively in the quest for a future we can all be proud and part of.

Bottling the Spirit of Legend

A short list of the long-standing tradition of heritage bars and their storied legacy

By **SANDEEP ARORA**

For evenings given over to the flow of soul and the wafting spirit of cocktails and dreams, nostalgia can be the perfect companion. More so when you're nursing the amber smokiness of a Bowmore 12 YO at one of the most legendary bars in the country—The Bar, at The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata. Since I had visited the bar after almost a decade, it was a pleasant tumble down memory lane even though it has been refurbished. But memories of moments swirling in liquid gold and drams shared with old friends over new ideas are a joyful yet potent mix.

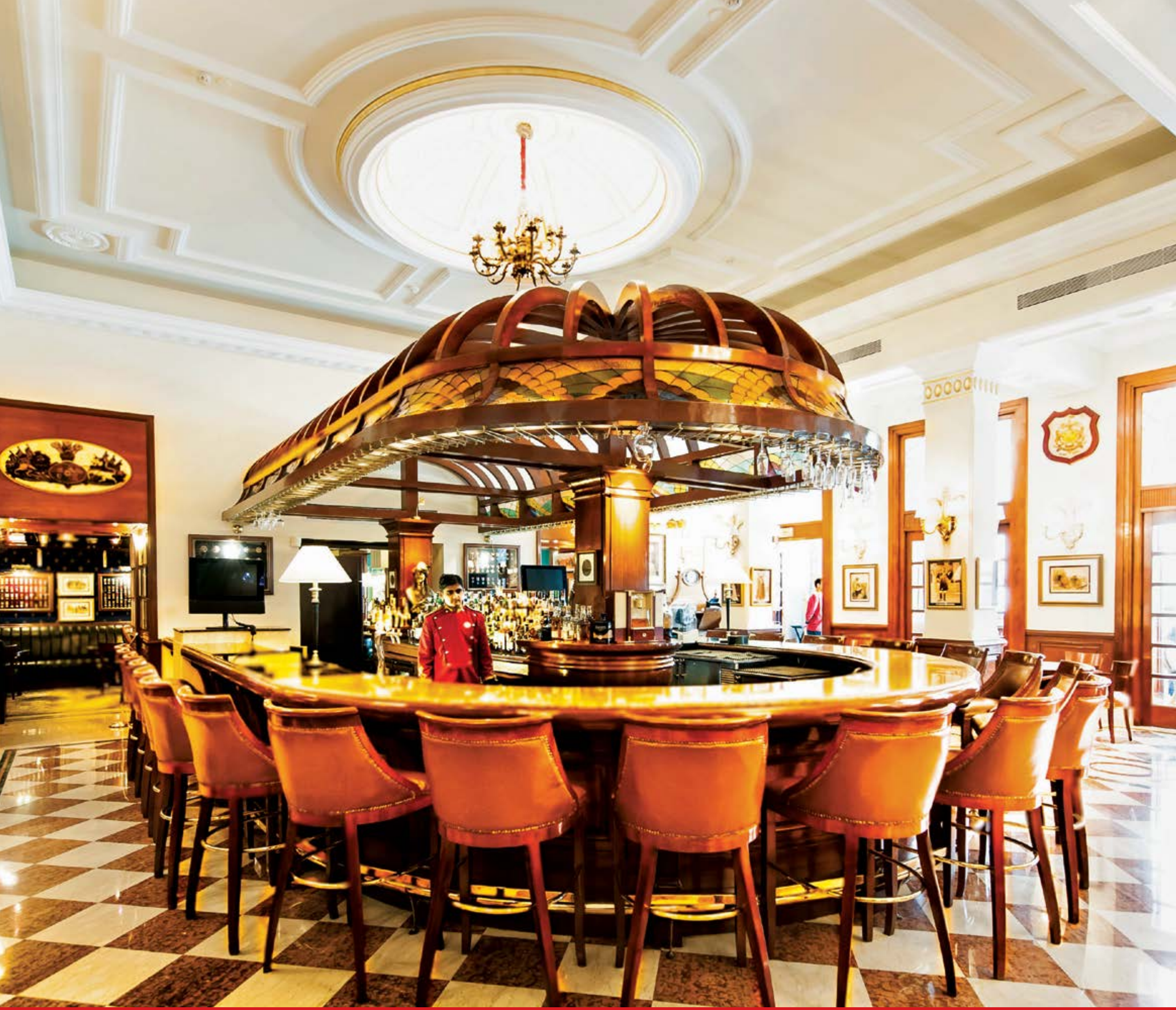
Coasting on nostalgia, I found my mind wandering back to all the legendary bars across India, where luxury, legend and history bask in liquid glory. While some of these magnificent watering holes are residents of equally glorious hotels, others locate their individualism as standalones. So what do these bars offer that makes them worthy of historical mention? Is it time that burns them into the annals of lore, or the gold standard of service excellence, carefully curated ambience or just the overall experience? Spice invites you to a delightful walk through some of the finest legacy bars in the country.

1911, The Imperial, New Delhi | Raj Nostalgia

1911 pays tribute to the historic milestone that led to the emergence of New Delhi as a seat of power. It came into existence in the later 90s, and the stunning bar is as well known for its world-class cocktails, as for its art deco interiors and colonial trivia. The excellent list of brews, single malts and impeccably blended cocktails are only in contest with the peerless service.

Soft Montana leather chairs, period portraiture, stained glass roof and wood panelling add that element of refinement, which makes it feel old- world and yet modern. Apart from premium whisky and wine varietals, it offers over 500 varieties of beverages as well as two stunning private rooms—Hardinge Room and the Lutyens & Baker Room. The walls in the Hardinge Room are adorned with period portraitures and the most coveted Victoria Cross- the highest gallantry award in the British Army, the one and only in the city.

USP A unique blend of Raj culture and Indian hospitality.



Polo Bar, Rambagh Palace, Jaipur | Lesson in History

As the name suggests, the Polo Bar was a unique part of the palace and a popular meeting place to celebrate the polo victories of the Late Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II. Even today the gentry boasts dignitaries and polo players during and off the polo season. This legendary bar was the first licensed bar of the state of Rajasthan, and comes with a fair share of fascinating history with the generously dispersed photographs and paintings spinning a rich tapestry.

Famous guests included Jacqueline Kennedy, Prince Philip, King Husain of Jordan, HE King Birendra of Nepal, Omar Sharif, Christopher Lee, Boris Becker, Sting, Mick Jagger, Calvin Klein, Nicola Bulgari, HH Queen of Netherlands, the Queen of Qatar, Bjorn Borg and many more have celebrated evenings at this heritage bar that boasts a fountain lined with blue pottery tiles.

The bar serves signature cocktails inspired by the royal sport and the shelves are lined with the finest of rare whiskies, single malts, cognacs, wines and liqueurs, and a hand-picked selection of cigars.

USP One of the favourite and most authentic royal cocktails, Jaipur Martini, topped with a rose Petal in deference to the Pink City.

Harbour Bar, The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai | Glory Days

It was in 1933 that Harbour Bar at The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai first opened its doors. Today, it represents the perfect amalgamation of old world charm and contemporary sophistication with its evolved décor and creatively presented menu. The design and décor of Harbour Bar is heavily influenced by its rich history, with echoes of its Art Deco legacy that find artistic representation in the furniture and finishes.

In the 88 years since it opened, the Harbour Bar has served its fair share of cocktails. Rediscover the prohibition cocktails unique to Harbour Bar; the intoxicating list includes 'From the Harbour since 1933', a classic recipe which is the perfect blend of sweet and spicy.

Discover the Beatles best—a favorite of John Lennon and Yoko Ono: With a 'lil Help from my Friends' is a unique blend of caramel, cinnamon syrup, 18 Year Old Chivas Regal, garnished with an orange twist and Star Anise. Legend has it that although they never left their room during their stay, this cocktail was left outside the door every few hours for them to enjoy.

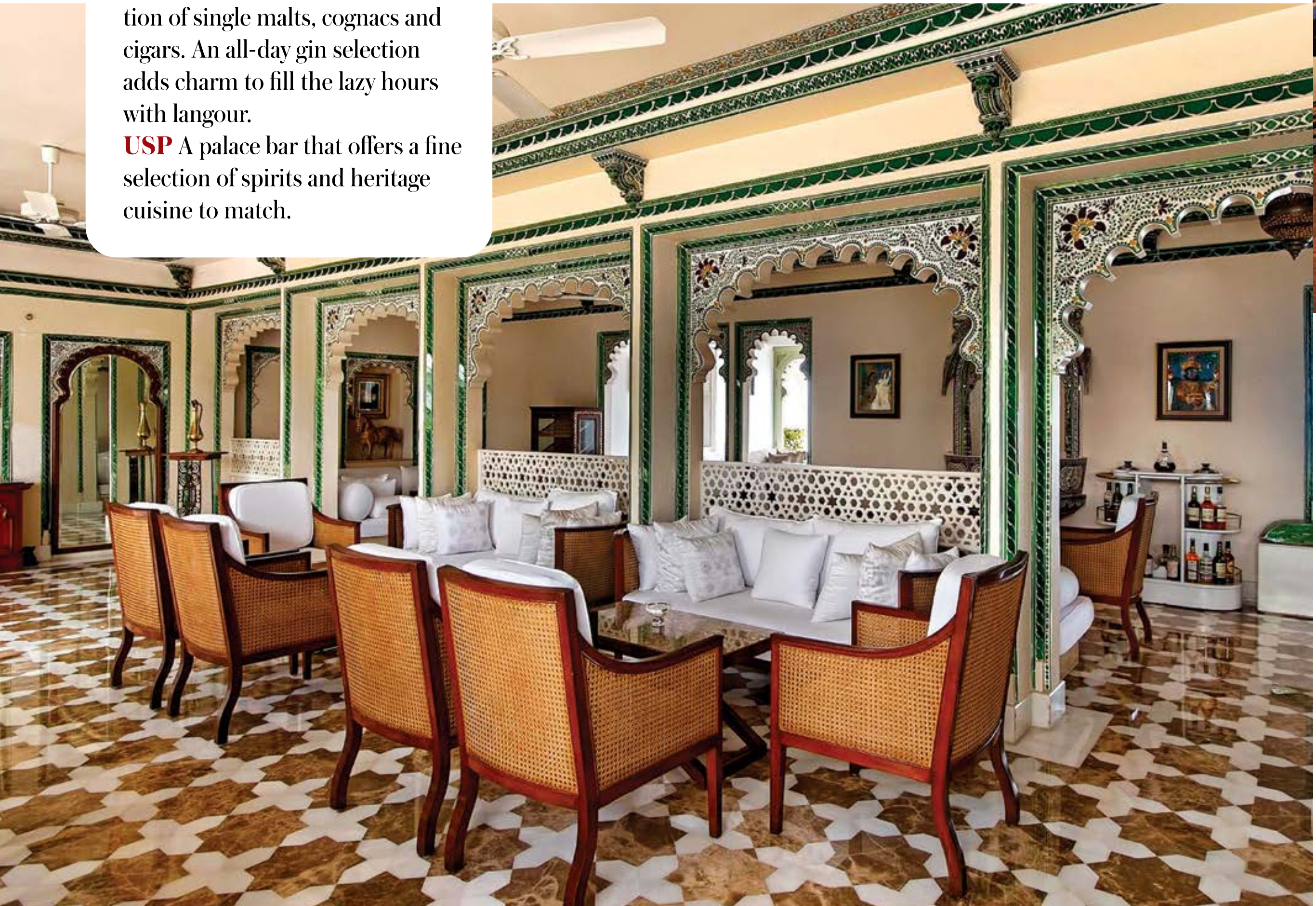
'Off to the Elephants' tells the tale of two key archaeologists responsible for the restoration of Elephanta caves and their never-ending love for whisky and rum—perhaps the recipe for many a nightcap that lasted into the wee hours of the morning. This cocktail has a tangy mix of peppercorns and honey syrup with Smokehead-infused dark chocolate and angostura bitters that circle back to endless conversations and nights that move into mornings.

USP Mumbai's first licensed bar

Amrit Sagar, The Lake Palace, Udaipur | Island Bar

Floating in the middle of Lake Pichola, this stylish bar is renowned for its selection of vintage wines, spirits, and cigars. The bar has a refreshing indoor-outdoor ambience and relaxed charm that marries various styles and rich textures. The sunlight mingles with the warm glow of the textured interiors to evoke a sense of tranquility that is ideal for traditional afternoon tea and light meals. The evening light transforms this space that lights up with its signature Martinis, Bellini's and cocktails, together with an enviable collection of single malts, cognacs and cigars. An all-day gin selection adds charm to fill the lazy hours with langour.

USP A palace bar that offers a fine selection of spirits and heritage cuisine to match.



Durrant's Bar at Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels, Chennai | In Vino Veritas

Paying tribute to Charles Durrant, the first wine merchant in the Madras Presidency (1863), this quiet corner in Welcomhotel, Cathedral Road, Chennai, is reminiscent of a gentleman's club in old London. With robust, chic interiors of wood, leather, and marble, upholding the tradition of Durrant and Spencer, the walls, and boards, and even the coasters resonate with history.

The Bar serves the finest premium spirits, with a choice selection of international single malts, whiskies, spirits, and refreshing cocktails, while providing the perfect atmosphere to relax. The leisurely colonial set-up seems even more delightful with the delectable food (global and domestic) created and curated by the best of ITC Chefs. Some of the signature concoctions include Ice Bite, Real Hot Chocolate, Espresso Martini, Blue Heaven Martini, Between the Sheets, Blue Lagoon, Cupe Codder. Paired with thoughtfully curated snacks for a great culinary experience, this is where the marina and martini cohabit.

USP Lost in time, this is a heritage property that should be on every traveller and tippler's list.

Wilson's The Pub - The Lalit Great Eastern Kolkata | Storied Legacy

The Great Eastern Hotel is a legendary landmark in world hotel history. Started in 1840, by David Wilson, a baker from Herefordshire, this is the first luxury hotel of Asia. As a tribute to the legendary David Wilson, the bar at the hotel was christened "Wilson's —The Pub".

With a glass ceiling and brick-wall decor, Wilson's has a unique charm of its own. Gradually over the years, Wilson's has gained popularity and is now one of the city's most sort after destination for party lovers with music and bites as a weekend attraction. Cocktails from the menu are a hot favourite that for discerning guests.

USP Rest assured, this is the place where you can get the finest selection of cigars in the city

The Writers Bar, The Savoy Welcomhotel, Mussourie | A Pen-chant for passion

The Writer's Bar at Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels The Savoy Mussoorie is a delightful menagerie of colonial interiors, magnificent mountain views and an enviable collection of luxury beverages. It's name is a tribute to the literary giants who have visited or resided at The Savoy, including Rudyard Kipling, Ruskin Bond and Stephen Alter, and enjoyed their favourite tipple. With picturesque environs, there's nowhere quite like The Writer's Bar, and the ambience infused with history makes this a bar in a million.

USP The century old hotel itself, offers a wonderful mix of comforting old-fashioned charm and new-age conveniences.

Zing Zing Bar, Span Resorts, Manali I
Ain't no mountain high enough

Zing Zing Bar is a sensory delight, filled to be brim with stunning views matched only by the warmth of charcoal heaters, the choicest cocktails and some of the rarest whiskies. Savour fine malts, exclusive wines, exotic cocktails, and delectable nibbles in an intimate setting with cozy seating. Zing Zing Bar also features Span Resort & Spa's very own branded collection of liqueurs, cognac, and malts. The stories accompanying the signature cocktails (engagingly retold by the old guard bartender, Sher Singh), are as enthralling as the drinks themselves, and of course, there's plenty to whet your appetite, too, with a bar menu curated by the hotel's highly sought-after restaurant—Walk Around the World.

USP Manali city's oldest bar, it was set up way back in 1981

Dal Bar – The Lalit Grand Palace, Srinagar I
Lake Palace

Designed and built by Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1910, The LaLiT Grand Palace Srinagar is the final destination for the discerning itinerant. Nestled amid the majestic Zabarwan ranges, the hotel stands witness to key events in India's history and proudly continues the royal legacy with élan. The Dal Bar, tastefully decorated with timber and stone finishes offers large windows that let in the light as effectively as they offer enthralling views of the gardens and the Dal Lake beyond. If your cup doesn't run over with the capturing sights, there's always fine single malts, wines and liqueurs.

USP Quaint and charming, the stunning views are as worthy of a toast as the tipple itself.

RAISING A TOAST

Here are a few more smaller bars that may not top the luxe quotient but are legendary in their own right

Cavalry Bar at Wild flower Hall, Shimla Fine spirits, quaint interiors with majestic views

The Bar at The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata Brimming with nostalgic charm and memories of old Calcutta.

The Bar at Delhi Gymkhana Club, New Delhi An old favourite with regulars and club patrons especially on Thursdays

The Bar at the Tollygunge Club, Kolkata Business, political and social discussions over beer, whisky and old world gravitas.

Leopold Café, Mumbai Still crowded every single day as has been the case for the last few decades. This famous cafe was established in 1871 and is a gathering ground for locals as well as tourists. It remains a favourite for the beer, gin and some great food.

Timeless Allure

Racer-turned-CEO, Adrian Bosshard of Rado in a freewheeling chat about the brand's love for ceramics and its enduring love affair with Hrithik Roshan

By **DHIRAM SHAH**

What's the similarity between a motorcycle racer and a watch-lover? While this sounds like the beginning of a clever joke, it isn't. In fact, when you think about it, it's fascinating how timeless the association between both these passions are. And no one embodies this intersection of love interests like Adrian Bosshard, the CEO of Rado. A former motorcycle racer, who secretly harboured a love for watches, finally decided to translate his love for timepieces into his forte. "Watches have always been my passion," he confesses. "Whether it's motorcycles or watches, I have been lucky to have worked in fields that I have been passionate about, especially Rado, which is a strong, beautiful, and unique brand."

Today, Rado prides itself on being a pioneer and master of materials. The brand's ceramic pieces have been globally adored and adorned for years now. "The biggest ask of customers is to have a watch that looks as good as new, for many years", says Bosshard. "We found that ceramic embodied the strength of hard metal, way back in 1986. It was light and adapts to the temperature of the body, offering great scratch-resistance. This has been one of the key reasons of success for Rado in India." This famed durability also positions Rado as one of the most preferred watches to be handed down generations, without losing the sheen of newness. Need a new family tradition? Start right here.

*
Adrian Bosshard

*

RADO'S MAGIC MANTRA
A new capmapign visual with Rado's brand ambassador, Hrithik Roshan

Sustainability in action

As it goes with all leading watch brands today, Rado ensures sustainable processes as well. "Sustainability was always built into the way we work, from factories to material production, and even our business strategies. We believe we are passengers in the world, and we have only one plane to travel on."

The India story

Rado's all-new True Square has introduced the world to beautiful square watches. For which they have collaborated with designers from around the world, including India. As far as his views on digital watches are concerned, Bosshard responds as most purists would: "Digital watches are more computers than watches. They aren't a true competition to Swiss watchmaking, especially Rado. Of all the 1.3 billion watches produced, only three per cent are Swiss watches. But this small portion represents two-thirds of the watch business. Rado doesn't just offer a watch; it offers a work of art that is durable and lasting."

Today, only three percent of Indians can afford a Rado watch, but Bosshard sees this number growing in the future. "We see a typical Rado customer as a person who is searching for their ideal values such as reliability and genuineness, which is reflected in our watches. We are a brand that caters to individuals who aspire for something unique, but also appreciate value for money."

On the brand's continued association with Hrithik Roshan

Many Indians have found their love for Rado through the brand ambassador, Hrithik Roshan. "We are not just in a partnership with Hrithik," declares Bosshard. "It's a friendship. Our brand finds a perfect fit with him and our values. He is a serious, well-appreciated global superstar and we're proud to have such a strong relationship with him not only in India but also other countries."

He acknowledges Rado's leadership position in India but just like a champion motorcyclist, he is still hungry for more developments. In terms of expansion, the brand's aim is not to be everywhere but to be at quality locations. I guess, racing ahead isn't the only thing that matters.

*

BLACK MAGIC
Rado Captain Cook High Tech Ceramic (opposite page and below)

NIP AND TUCK
Volvo has updated its XC60 with refreshed styling, enhanced connectivity features in association with Google along with a petrol mild hybrid powertrain in place of a diesel one

DRIVING TOWARDS GREENER PASTURES

Volvo Car India has updated its range of luxury offerings including the XC60 SUV ditching the diesel powertrain in favour of a greener mild-hybrid alternative

ENGINE 1,969cc, four-cylinder, turbo petrol

LXWXH 4,708 x 1,902 x 1,653mm

GEARBOX 8-speed AT

MAX POWER 250bhp

0-100KMPH 6.9s

MAX TORQUE 350Nm

0-100KMPH 6.9s

WHEELBASE 2,865mm

TOP SPEED 180kmph

PRICE ₹61.90 lakh (ex-showroom, India)

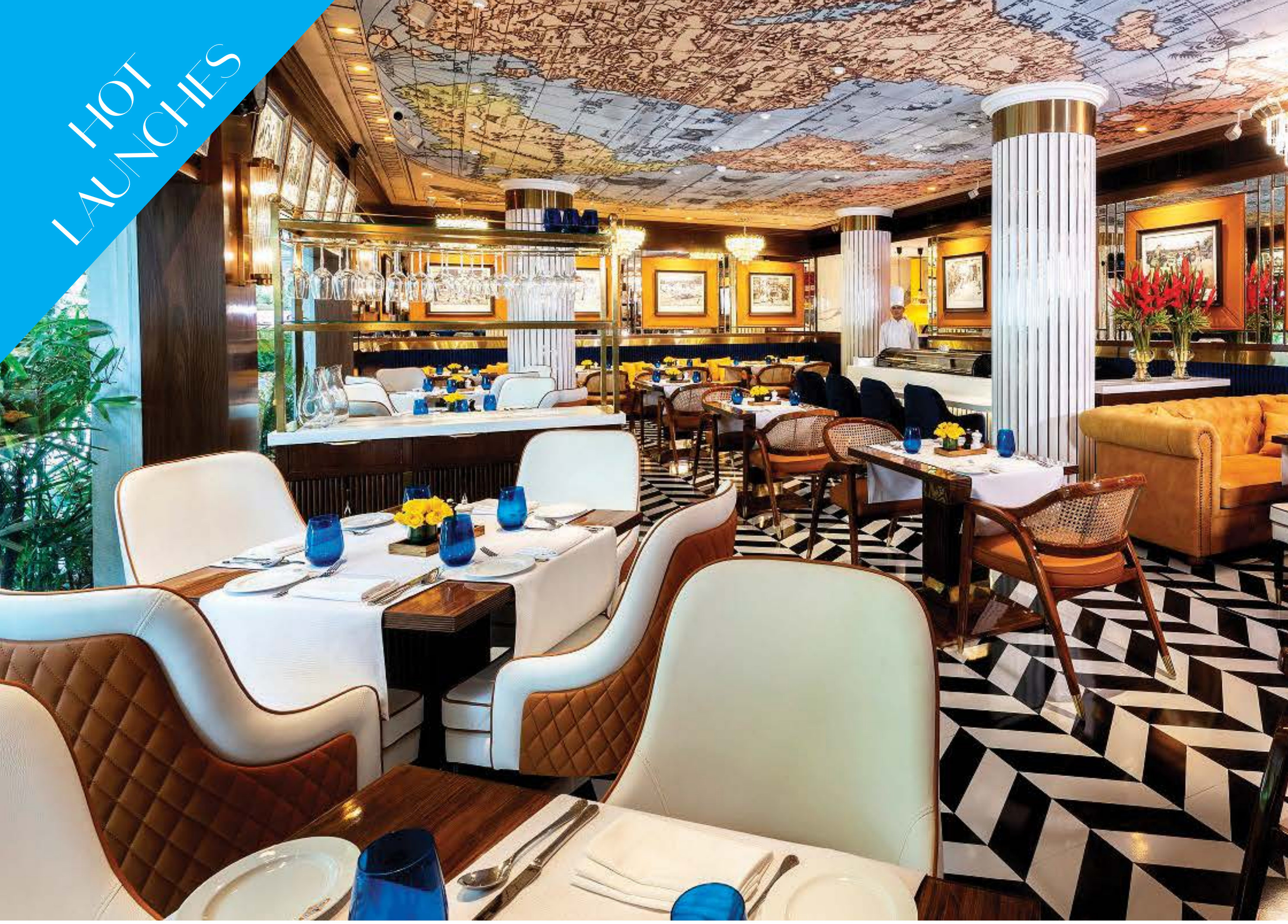
By **DHRUV SAXENA**

Swedish luxury car maker Volvo has rolled out an updated version of its XC60 SUV and the headline here is the introduction of a mild-hybrid powertrain as the company looks towards transitioning to a petrol-only portfolio. The list of revisions also includes updates to the exterior with restyled bumpers, new alloy wheel design and exterior colour options. Inside, the large portrait-style touchscreen incorporates an Android powered infotainment setup with Google apps, Google Assistant as well as Google Maps, making the experience of accessing services via the infotainment unit much more user friendly.

Apart from the updated infotainment unit, the XC60's cabin boasts the use of new materials including luxurious leather-free options. Safety, as always, is under prime focus with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) that employ an array of radars, cameras and sensors for the protection of occupants. The XC60 gets adaptive cruise control, lane keeping aid, collision warning and mitigation (front and rear) to name a few. Under the hood of the new Volvo XC60 resides a new 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine that benefits from mild-hybrid technology. With peak power and torque outputs of 250bhp and 350Nm respectively, the Volvo XC60 is quick on its feet dashing from 0 to 100kmph in just 6.9 seconds. An all-wheel-drive setup is offered as standard ensuring that the XC60 remains unfazed in the face of off-road excursions.

Winner of the 2018 World Car of the Year title, the Volvo XC60 was and remains one of the best luxury SUVs in its segment with handsome styling, luxurious interiors, a modern Android-based infotainment system and best-in-class safety features. With the introduction of a mild-hybrid powertrain, it is now easier on the environment and efficient enough to be easy on wallets too. Clearly, the winner takes it all.

The 2021 Volvo XC60 is now on sale in India priced at ₹61.90 lakh (ex-showroom, India).



Colonial Cousins

The relaunched Pickwick at the Claridges New Delhi, celebrates the past with an eye on the future.

By **CHUMKI BHARADWAJ**

For those bitten by the nostalgic bug, Pickwick, the multi-cuisine coffee shop at the Claridges represents a slice of old-world Delhi. Check, memories drunk on modest budgets; midnight stop-bys and magic moments spent basking on familiar footing. Mercifully, the restaurant—inspired by Charles Dickens' novel *The Pickwick Papers*—still holds on to its quaint, cosy charm. The refurbishment, both architectural and gastronomic, introduces itself as a world cuisine restaurant. The spruced-up décor harks back to elegant British interiors, with illustrations from *The Pickwick Papers,* as the menu picks favourites from among old English classics such as Toad in the Hole, Shepherd Pie, Fish and Chips and Bangers and Mash. The 'Cuisine Without Borders' chooses an inventive approach to contemporary British, but also includes American, European, Indian and Japanese dining. A sushi bar that will serve an omakase menu has been planned as well. The look and feel is delightfully vintage, and lovingly recreated with an impressive old map that stretches right across the ceiling in Sistine Chapel mode. The floor to ceiling

glass on one side of the space, brings the best of Lutyen's outdoors in. Finding picturesque calm in the middle of Delhi is a find in itself, but with great food and fine cocktails, it is the perfect spot for breakfast, lazy luncheons or even just an indulgent night cap. Our recommendation: the vegetarian version of Shepherd pie (ingenious!) and the Beer-battered Fish & Chips, served with a spritz of Malt vinegar (at the table) to recreate the authentic scent is charming. As for cocktails, mention your palate preferences to the beverage manager and sit back and enjoy the spoils.

What Pickwick
Where Claridges Hotel, Delhi
Cost ₹3,500 (for two) plus taxes (without alcohol)

Heart to Hearth

The Tangra Project in Delhi's DLF avenue is where you read history on the menu and taste ingenuity on your palate

History, hedonism and heritage don't wrestle on the plate but blissfully co-exist in harmony at The Tangra Project. This is chef Vikramjit Roy's newest engagement that finds fulfillment within a curated 3,100 sq. ft space tucked away in a cosy corner in 'The DLF Commons'. As expected of Roy, playing within the bounds or thinking inside the box is not an option. As with their walk-in-bar, which has no doors or gated access (they don't have a licence just yet), the dining area too plays into the hands of imagination, draws from memory and coasts on nostalgia. The space flows languorously around the kitchen, making the hearth, the heart of this matter. The floors hark back to the streets of Tangra in Kolkata, and even the uneven columns built with basic marble tell stories of a time well spent scouring second hand books from the city's famed College Street. Strangely, even though, it's nestled smack in the middle of a mall, the noisy jostling doesn't dent the nostalgic ambience, or appear gimmicky. Food offers the best of Kolkata's inclusive generosity when it comes to culinary history. More than 200 dishes take ownership, segmented on the basis of the neighborhoods and other inspiring influences. There's Burrah Sahib's Bawarcheekhana, My Mum's kitchen, New Market's Kathi Mera Sathi", Bao Baazar, Kowloon to Kalikatta dumplings and more. Our special recommendation: Gondhoraj fish dumpling and Lichi rabri with a raspberry sorbet.

What The Tangra Project
Where DLF Avenue, Delhi
Cost ₹2,000 (for two) plus taxes)

Terms of Endearment

Indulgence never needs the crutch of a celebration, but with the festive season upon us, tradition serves as license that simply sweetens the deal.

By **CHUMKI BHARADWAJ**

COLD LOVE
Artisanal Ice Cream
ALL NATURAL

* **COLD LOVE**
Simple, pure, limited ingredients come together to bring delicious and perfectly textured ice cream in unique, luxurious flavours. This old-fashioned indulgence that is the brainchild of Aditya Tripathi, became an instant success in Delhi with its first offering. Now, collaborating with Top Chef Master and Michelin Star Chef Suvir Saran and his mentee, Vardaan Marwah, Cold Love's offering extends to natural, organic, sustainable ingredients that are handcrafted in small batches. The proof of the pudding lies in its taste. Sample their chewy caramel

discs that hold ice cream captive in caramel and chocolate. Death by chocolate is how we like it!

Contact www.coldlove.in / +91 97111 36997

COU COU

The newest French-style patisserie, in Mumbai, just opened doors at Jio World Drive, Bandra Kurla Complex. It is the first independent food and beverage outlet brought out by the Oberoi Group. Everyday indulgence made special is where Cou cou scores big with freshly-baked bread, cakes, handmade chocolates, homemade gourmet ice creams and an eclectic selection of savoury delights. If you're as intrigued by the name as we were, Cou Cou is an informal greeting used in France by the young and old alike. It can mean anything from "hello, how are you", to "welcome". The culinary masterpieces are brought to life by Chef Pierre Storti and Chef Pratik Deshmukh. The homemade chocolate and cookies section offers homemade single origin chocolate and pastries.

Where Jio World Drive in the Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai.

CAFE MONIQUE

Located at Amaara Farms in New Delhi, this French patisserie aligns with authentic vintage recipe heirlooms from France. Founder Shivan Gupta has collaborated with French chef Maxime Montay to craft sweet sonnets that offer a specially-curated menu of artisanal desserts including flavoursome macaroons to decadent tarts and cakes using seasonal ingredients. Signature desserts include Le Paris-Brest (a traditional choux pastry filled with delectable almond and hazelnut praline) and La Tarte Tropézienne (a brioche packed with light vanilla cream and poached pears).

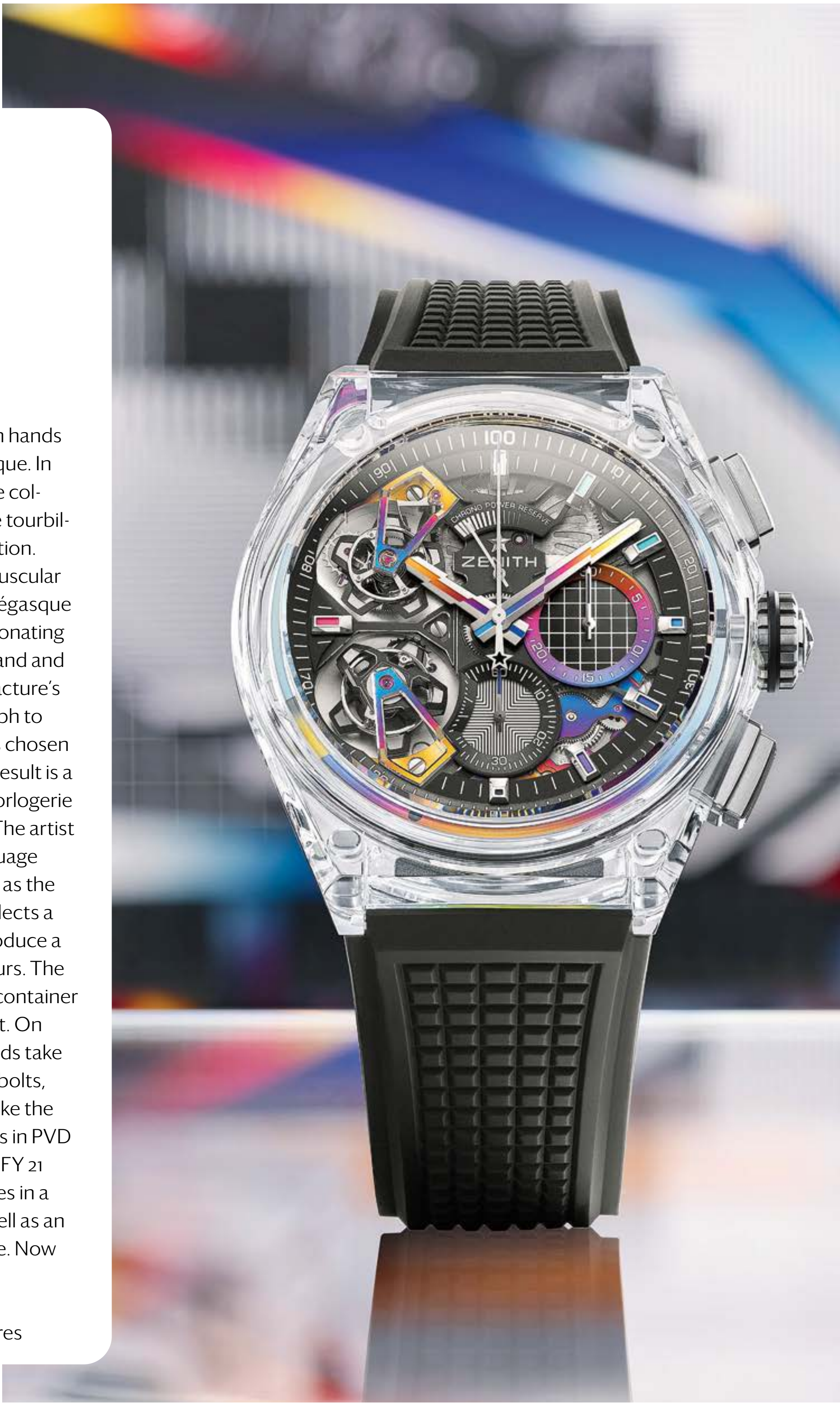
To order https://cafemonique.com/

LAST LOOK

The Art of Craft

When haute horology and optical art join hands for a great cause, the union is always unique. In this case, Zenith and Felipe Pantone have collaborated to create a unique defy double tourbillon for the "Only Watch 2021" charity auction. The charity raises funds for duchenne muscular dystrophy through the Association Monégasque contre les Myopathies, by creating and donating a truly unique piece with friend of the brand and collaborator Felipe Pantone. The Manufacture's most advanced and complex chronograph to date, the DEFY 21 Double Tourbillon, was chosen as the canvas for this unique piece. The result is a masterful feat of contemporary haute horlogerie as well as a dynamic work of kinetic art. The artist has translated his acclaimed design language onto the movement's decoration as well as the open dial. The coating on the bridges reflects a gradient of metallic rainbow tones to produce a spectrum of perfectly transitioning colours. The entire movement is fixed within a metal container that is also given the same rainbow effect. On the dial, the central hour and minute hands take on a distorted look resembling lightning bolts, a recurring element in Pantone's work. Like the movement, a rainbow gradient of colours in PVD is applied onto the hands as well. The DEFY 21 Double Tourbillon Only Watch 2021 comes in a special box resembling an art book, as well as an original signed artwork by Felipe Pantone. Now that's an artful presentation.

Price on request; **Availability** Brand stores



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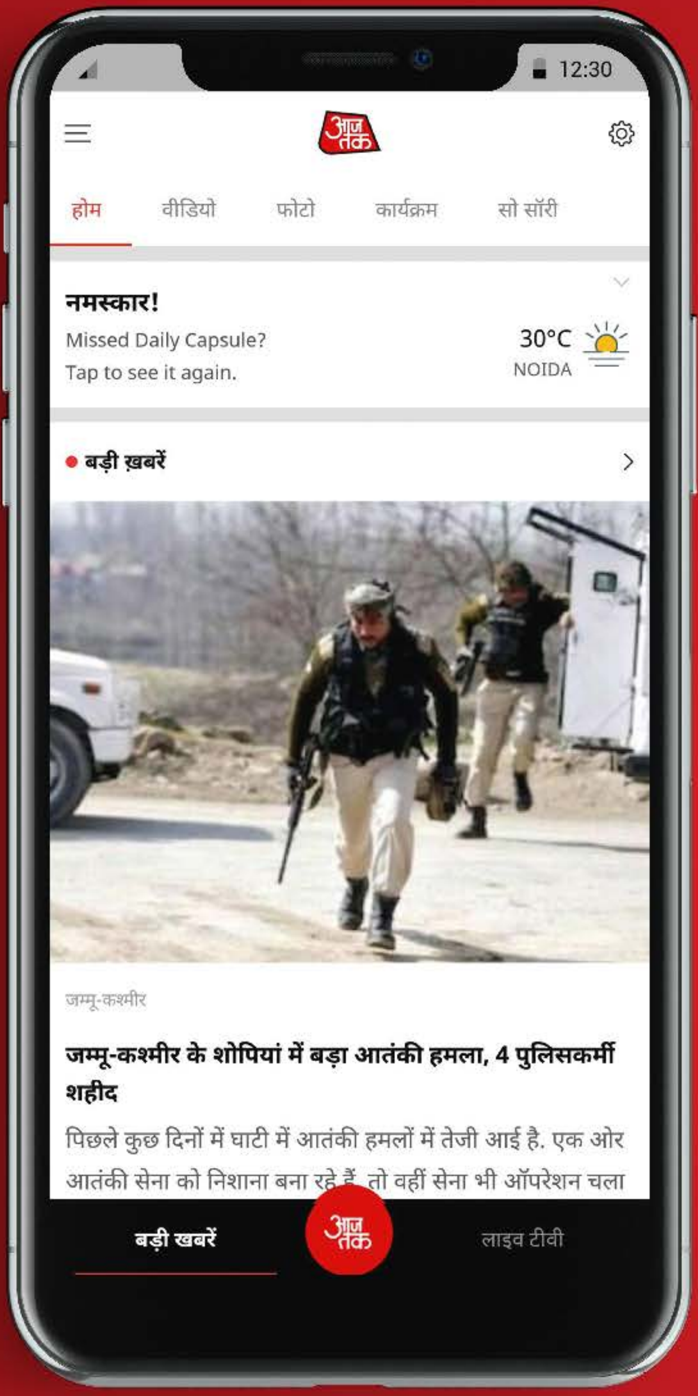

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NOVEMBER 2021

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FROM APPLIANCES TO LAYOUTS, ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW TO DESIGN YOUR DREAM COOKING STATION

INSIDE

A HOME INSPIRED BY THE HONEYCOMB

TREND

DRESS YOUR SPACE, JAPANDI STYLE

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Photograph by: SAMEER TAWDE Photograph courtesy MUSELAB

iSpy

Your guide to the hottest new stores and products

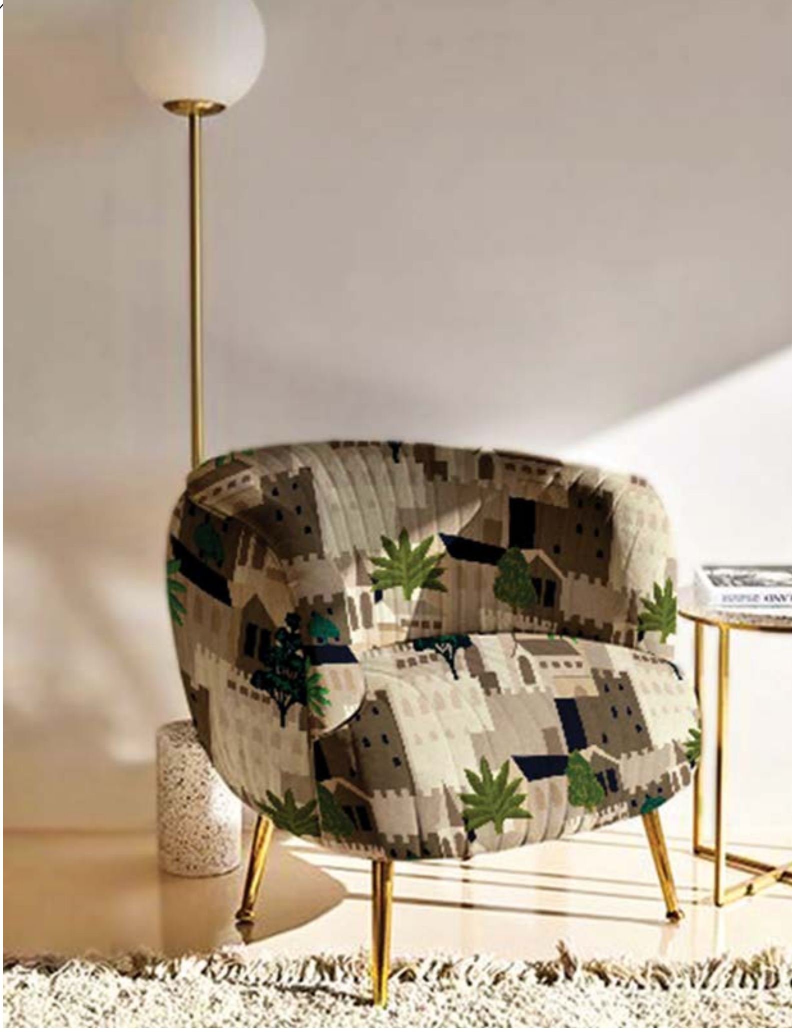
By **RIDHI KALE**

CRAFT DRIVEN

Add colour to your space with GharGhar's kilim cushions. The designs are printed on 100 per cent cotton chenille fabric, which has a fuzzy feel due to the pile.

PRICE ₹1,300 to ₹1,500

AT *www.gharghar.in*



FROM THE TROPICS

Bring a slice of Goa inside your homes with Beyond Dreams' latest collection. The eclectic range showcases floral, architectural and historical diversity of the state. Invoking a sense of freshness and serenity, the collection is a timely reminder of the beauty this tropical destination holds.

PRICE ₹1,595 to ₹1,795

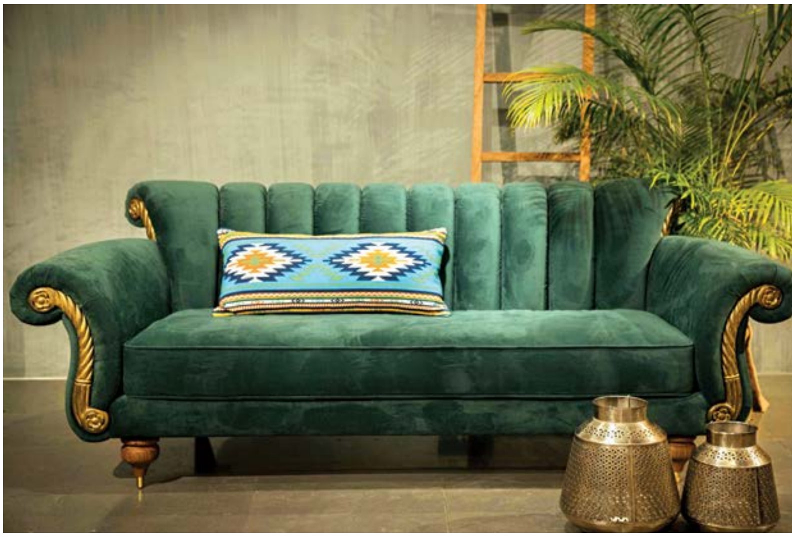
AT *@beyondreams.in* (Instagram)

HAUTE SEATS

Inhabit has launched a new range of seating ensembles. You can expect rich hues such as sapphire, emerald, turquoise, ruby, quartz and opal that spell opulence. Featured here is the green sofa with a beautifully curved structure and brass details.

PRICE on request

AT *www.neetakumar.com*



WHAT'S IN STORE

Handcrafted homeware brand Ellementry has opened a new outlet in Select CITYWALK Mall in Saket, Delhi. Don't miss the brass cookware and serveware collection or the handmade accent furniture.

PRICE ₹350 (for a napkin ring) onwards

AT *www.ellementry.com*

NEW ADDRESS

Bent Chair has relocated its new flagship store to Ambawatta in Delhi. Spread over 4,700 sq ft, the space is a modern and eclectic take on home decor concepts. They have also launched Bent Surfaces that focuses on unique stone patterns and inlays. Don't miss the interactive screen with Bent Reality, which helps customers understand interior styling and acts as a personal design guide.

PRICE ₹20,000 to ₹7 lakh

AT *www.bentchair.com*

MIXED BAG

VO Living, a furniture and lifestyle brand, has recently opened the doors to its flagship in Jangpura, Delhi. The store offers everything from bespoke furniture, globally sourced eclectic pieces and accessories to sculptural light fixtures, luxe fabrics, and furnishings.

PRICE ₹2,000 onwards **AT** *www.voliving.com*

One Stop Shop

From kitchens to dreamy bedrooms, this new showroom has everything you need for your home

By **RIDHI KALE**

The reason why everyone is so fond of Asian Paints, there is perhaps no other brand in the Indian market that has guessed what consumers need, faster than them. Their story may have started with paints and today has gone on to introduce luxe wallpapers, pretty lights, cosy linen and cute accessories, to name a few. The brand's new Asian Paints Beautiful Homes showroom is no different. Spread across a 22,000 plus sq ft, you can find just about everything here (be it bath, fabrics, furniture, lights or kitchens).

An interesting aspect is the Phygital (physical + digital) experience, which is essentially a 3BHK setup to enable personalised decor experience for the buyers. What's more, with the latest wood finish visualiser, the showroom is all set to transform the way customers look at furniture. The store is also home to a wide array of furniture and their modular kitchen display is drool-worthy, not to mention an extensive range of 600 wallpapers.

AT Novelty Homes, WP 484, Shiv Market,
Wazirpur, Ashok Vihar, Delhi

THE RIGHT CHOICE
You can purchase bed and furnishings (top left); lights in every size (top right), modular kitchens (left) and furniture (below) here

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PM Narendra Modi was speaking in Lok Sabha

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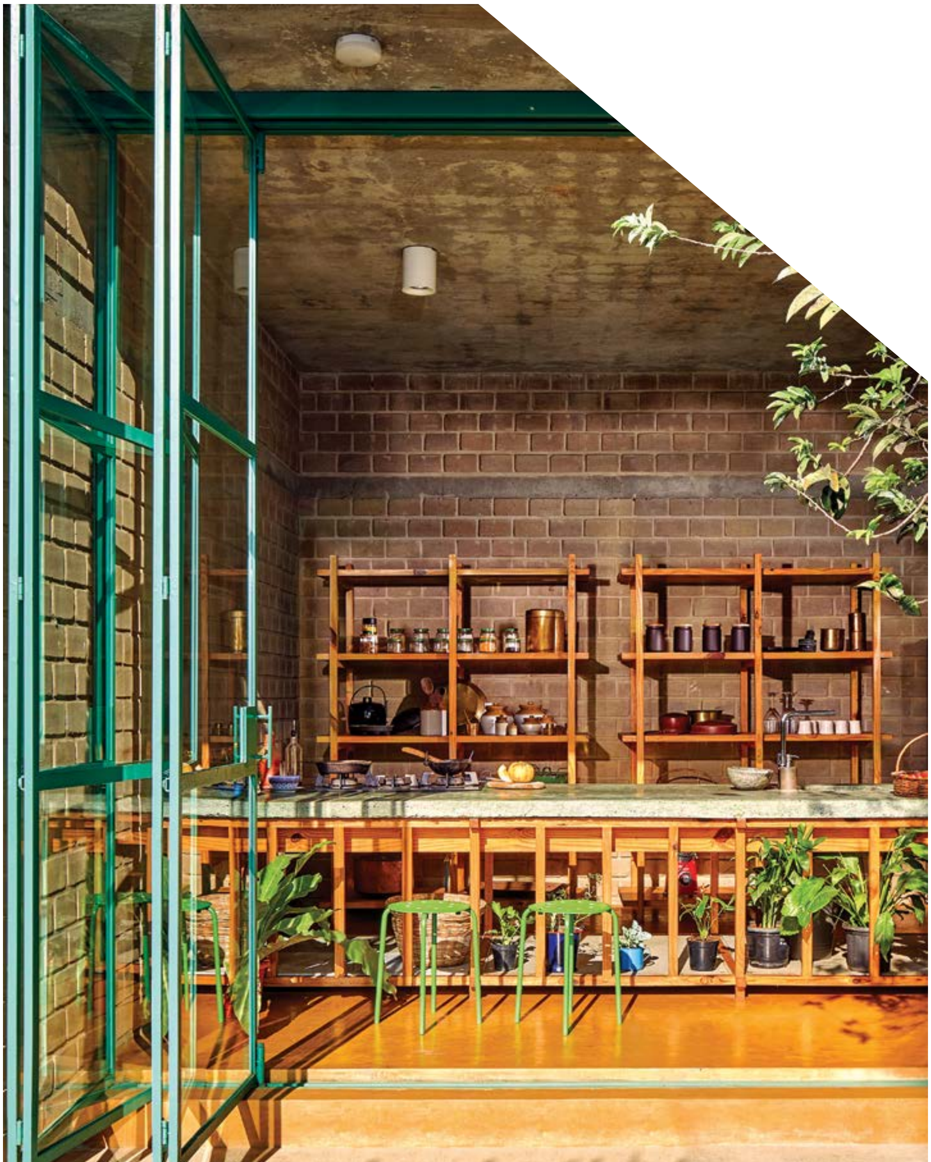
Stir Your Imagination

Looking for inspiration and ideas? We take you inside three real kitchens designed by architects and designers from across the country.

By **RIDHI KALE**

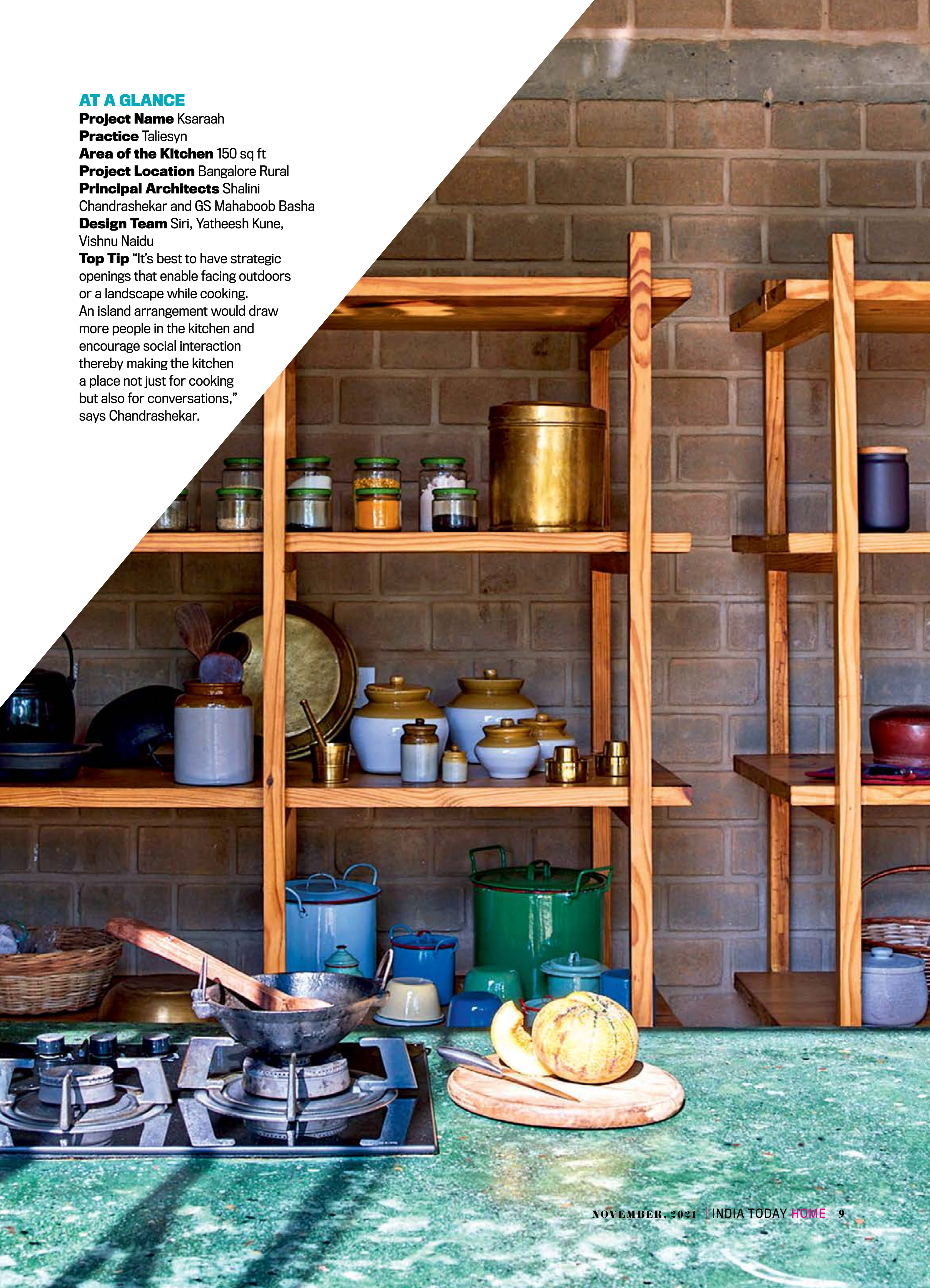


Photographs by: HARSHAN THOMSON

INSIDE OUTSIDE
The kitchen at Ksaraah, exemplifies a perfect balance between the Indian old and the new. Intended as a communal space for family and friends to gather, cook and eat together, the kitchen holds a long island that faces the lush green outdoors, enabling discussions and evoking inspiration. In an open kitchen format, the island was designed with a wooden base and a nice green terrazzo slab cast onsite with the washbasin. This adds a slight contrast to the interiors–bright yellow oxide flooring, a backdrop of Adobe brick wall, and display-focussed kitchen shelves showcase a collection of antique and modern cookware.

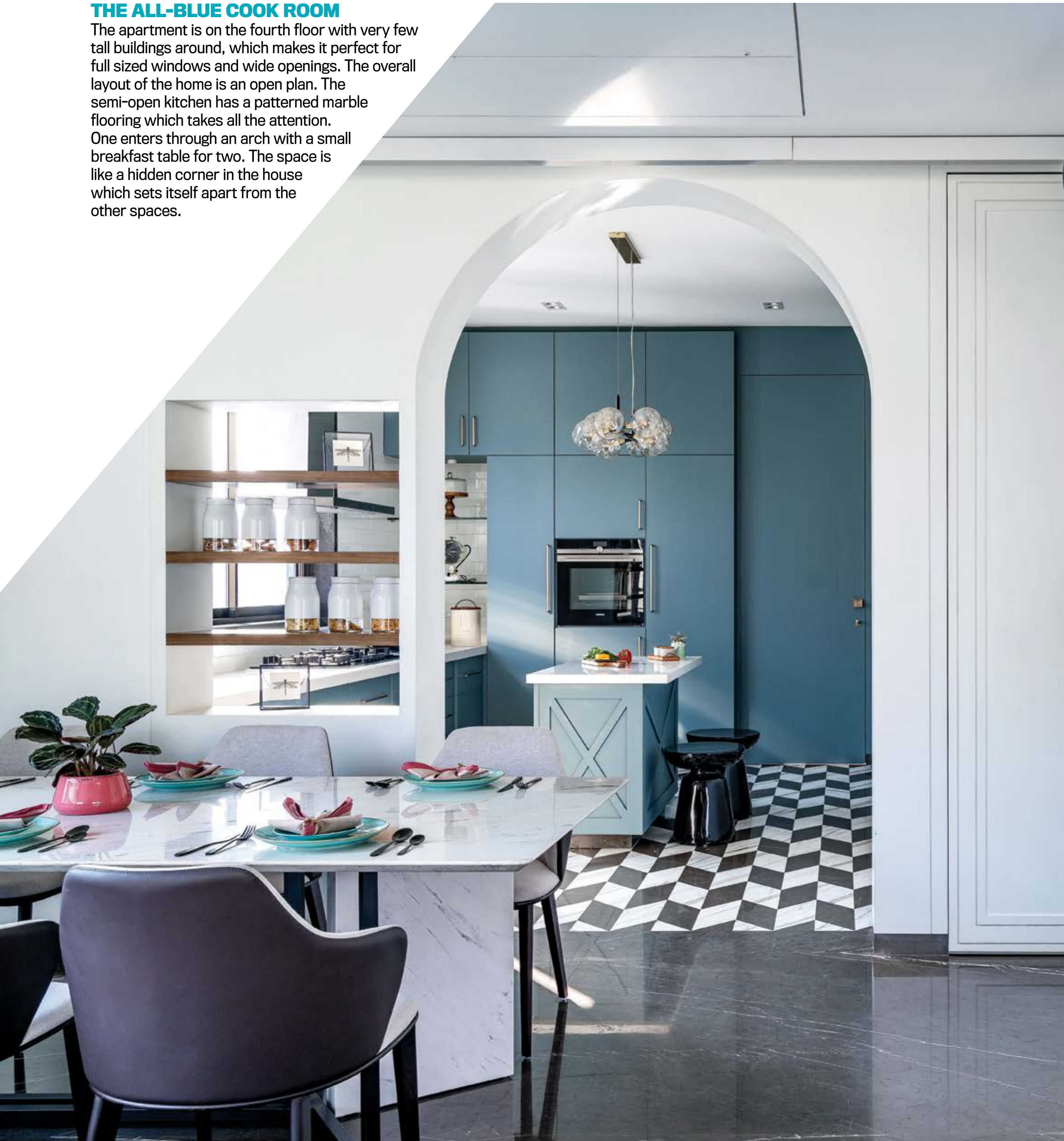
AT A GLANCE

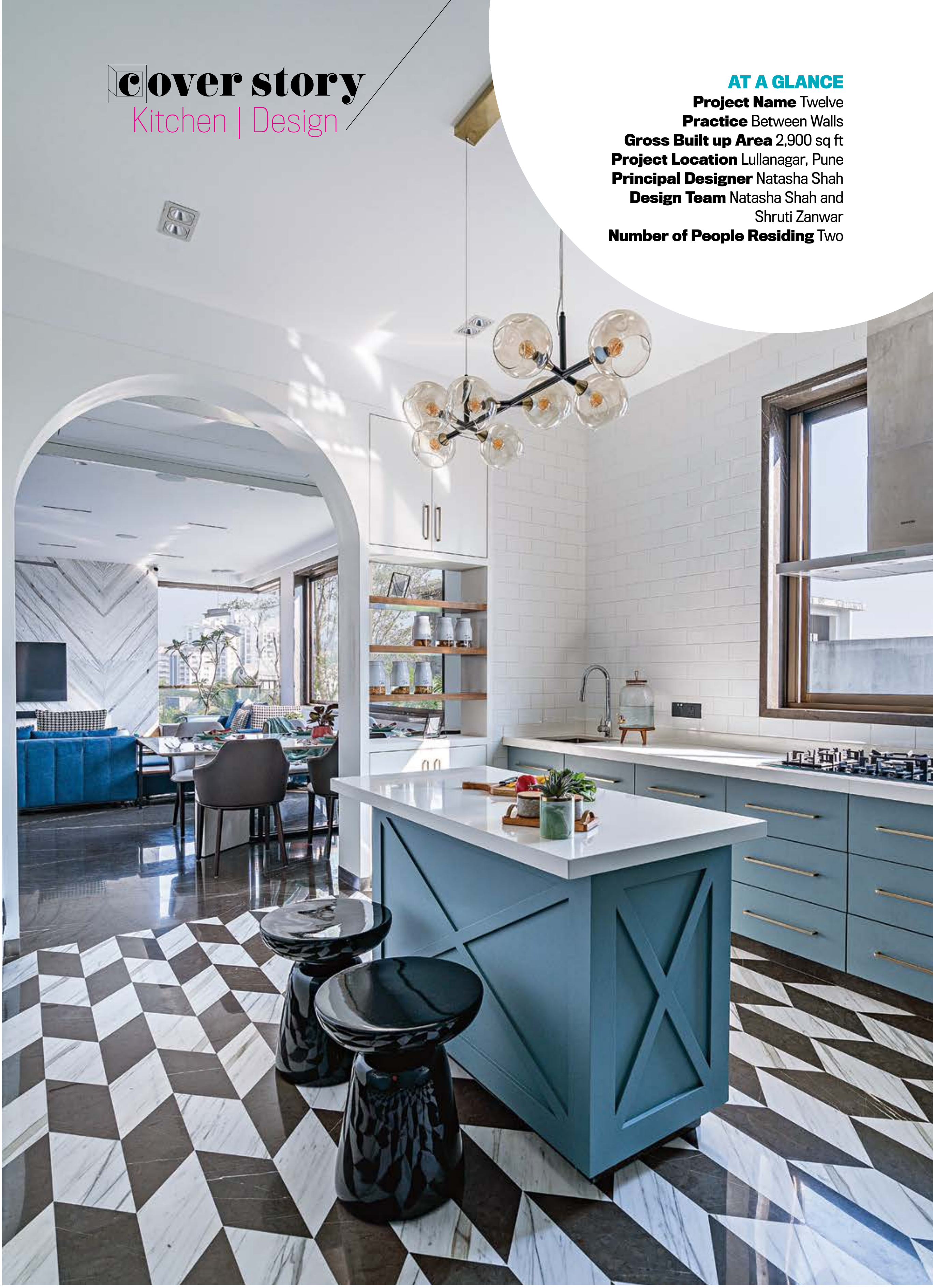
Project Name Ksaraah
Practice Taliesyn
Area of the Kitchen 150 sq ft
Project Location Bangalore Rural
Principal Architects Shalini Chandrashekar and GS Mahaboob Basha
Design Team Siri, Yatheesh Kune, Vishnu Naidu
Top Tip "It's best to have strategic openings that enable facing outdoors or a landscape while cooking. An island arrangement would draw more people in the kitchen and encourage social interaction thereby making the kitchen a place not just for cooking but also for conversations," says Chandrashekar.



THE ALL-BLUE COOK ROOM

The apartment is on the fourth floor with very few tall buildings around, which makes it perfect for full sized windows and wide openings. The overall layout of the home is an open plan. The semi-open kitchen has a patterned marble flooring which takes all the attention. One enters through an arch with a small breakfast table for two. The space is like a hidden corner in the house which sets itself apart from the other spaces.

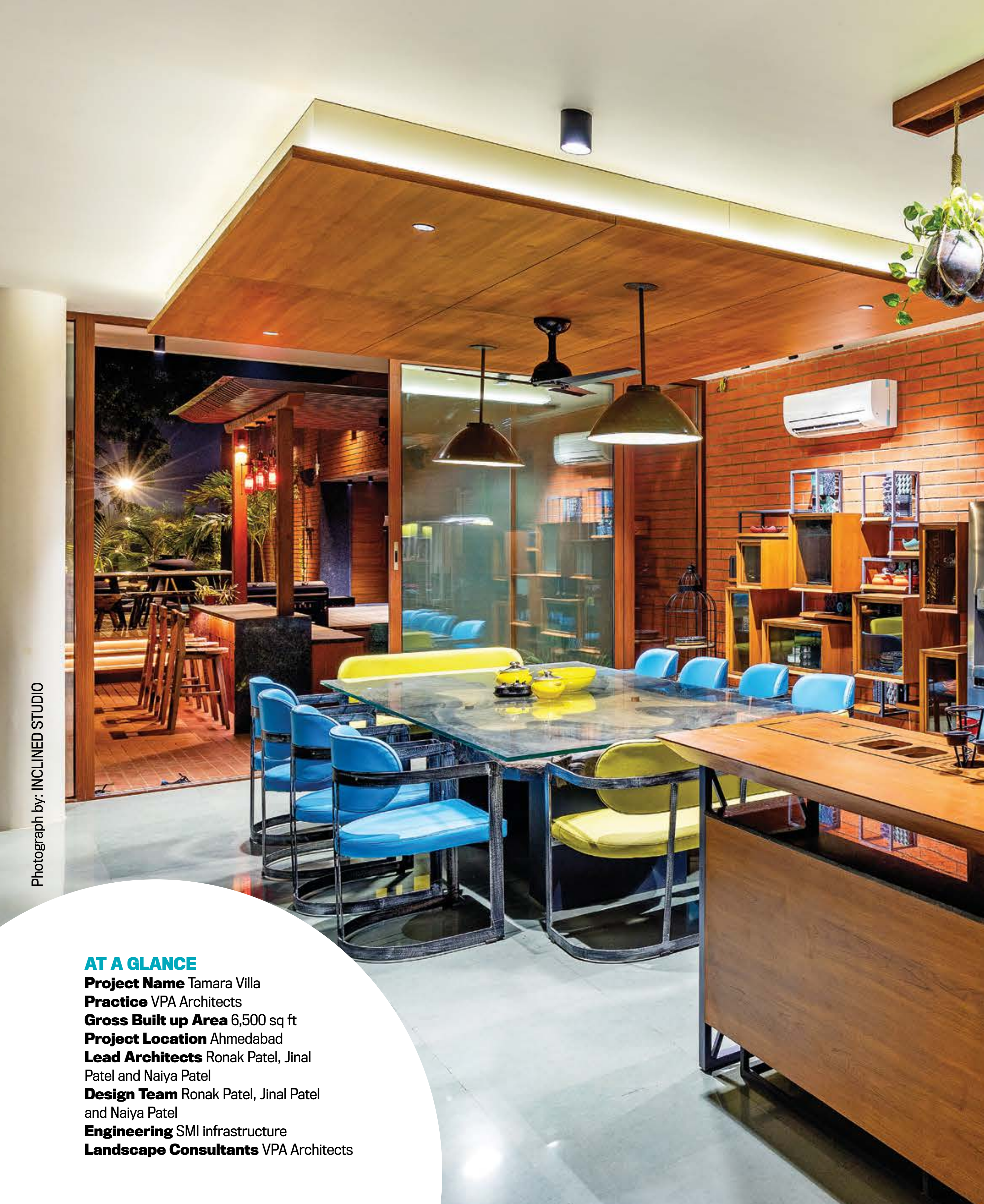




AT A GLANCE

Project Name Twelve
Practice Between Walls
Gross Built up Area 2,900 sq ft
Project Location Lullanagar, Pune
Principal Designer Natasha Shah
Design Team Natasha Shah and Shruti Zanwar
Number of People Residing Two

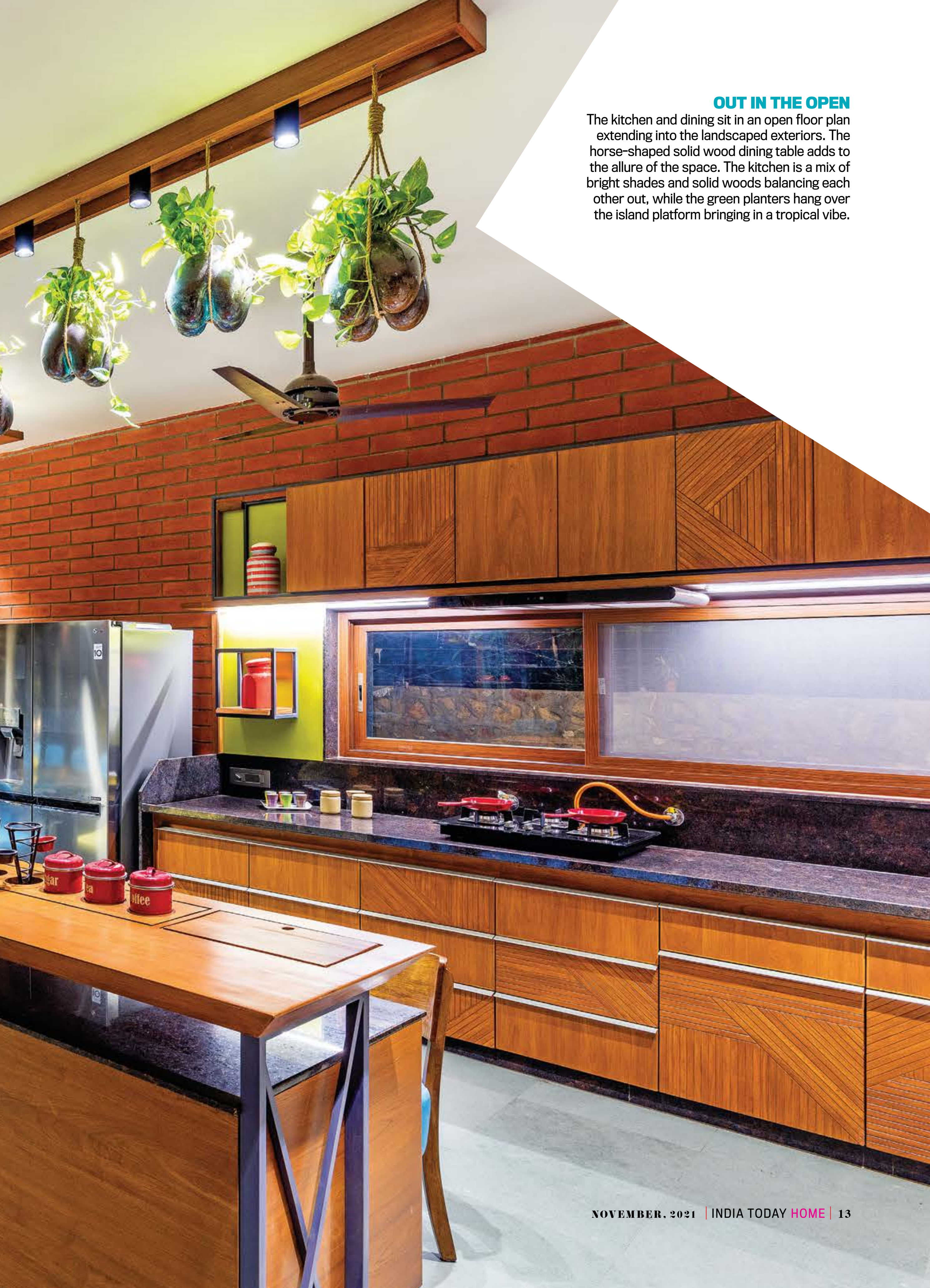
Photographs by: INCLINED STUDIO



Photograph by: INCLINED STUDIO

AT A GLANCE

Project Name Tamara Villa
Practice VPA Architects
Gross Built up Area 6,500 sq ft
Project Location Ahmedabad
Lead Architects Ronak Patel, Jinal Patel and Naiya Patel
Design Team Ronak Patel, Jinal Patel and Naiya Patel
Engineering SMI infrastructure
Landscape Consultants VPA Architects



OUT IN THE OPEN

The kitchen and dining sit in an open floor plan extending into the landscaped exteriors. The horse-shaped solid wood dining table adds to the allure of the space. The kitchen is a mix of bright shades and solid woods balancing each other out, while the green planters hang over the island platform bringing in a tropical vibe.

GOURMET'S DELIGHT

The act of cooking is part art, part meditative and a whole lot of skill. Here's a sneak peek inside a celebrated chef's kitchen.

By **VIKRAMJIT ROY**

Photograph by: HARDIK CHHABRA

The room where I cook is perhaps where I spend most of my time, more than what I spent at home or with anybody else. So the kitchen is my home. Actually, it's my first home, not even my second home. It's a space where like minded people collaborate to create something beautiful. Where there is compassion, there is love. There is a lot more than just the techniques and the standard recipes. But there is a lot of love that is there in the kitchen.

Personal Paradise

My home kitchen has a very basic and standard but effective set-up. It's spaciously laid out. I have a separate pre-prep area and the cooking station is separately placed. I like to maintain a rhythm while cooking. It has to be a process and setting up the space right helps a lot. I have a few basic smart -equipment such as blenders as well.

Form with Function

An ideal kitchen layout for me should be an efficient one. It has to make my job easier and systematic. The cooking station and the prep station should not intertwine, they should be separate. When I select any equipment I study how optimal it is for my space and not how fancy or expensive it is. However, having said that, I never compromise on the quality of the tools. Whatever leads me to put great food on a plate is important to me. They should not be merged together.

Space Management

One should have enough movement space for people in the kitchen. That doesn't mean that it's the size of a football field, but you should have enough arm space. Nobody wants to be included within their private spaces. So I make sure that we have enough of that free space for people for movement and align the kitchen in a way that it becomes easier for the line cooks and everybody else to operate. So there are a lot more technical things in it, but more or less holistically, this works very well.

Chef Vikramjit Roy is one of the co-founders of The Tangra Project, homage to the quintessential cuisine culture of Calcutta's food paradise in DLF Avenue, Saket, Delhi

GIZMO GAGA

QUICK LOOK AT THE CHEF'S FAVOURITE COOKING TOOLS AND GADGETS

The first one has to be the dehydrator because it helps me preserve my herbs and change textures.

The blender is a great equipment to have handy.

The kitchen thermometer is another favourite because it gives me precision in cooking. It's also another way to double check on the processes with a lot of things such as dimsums, vegetables, meats or seafood. It helps me make sure that it's cooked the way that I want it, not more or less.

And apart from these, other equipments that I can't do without include ovens, efficient gas ranges and more.

Ashok Basoya is the founder of Delhi-based interiors firm, Ottimo that curates Italian furniture and accessories and specialises in helping you design and plan your kitchens. www.ottimo.in

BEFORE YOU COOK UP A STORM

Over the counter, under it or both? Storage in the kitchen is a tricky thing but helps declutter the mother of all functional spaces in your home.

By **ASHOK BASOYA**

The heart of the home, the kitchen is where we store just about everything. Plus, you never really know what to keep and what to throw away. There are various design ideas you can use when you're thinking of kitchen storage options.

- **Under-cabinet cutting board storage sleeves** Instead of leaving your cutting boards on your kitchen slabs looking awkward and catching everyone's attention, create hooks or sleeves for boards to rest on just under the cabinet. It provides a very clean and organised look.

- **Put a few items on display** Everyone has a couple of beautiful sets that they only take a few times a year. Why not use that as display to make your kitchen look a lot more lavish and save the storage space in cabinets for items that are regularly used. This will allow you to easily differentiate between items whilst catching the eye of anyone who walks into your kitchen with your beautiful sets.

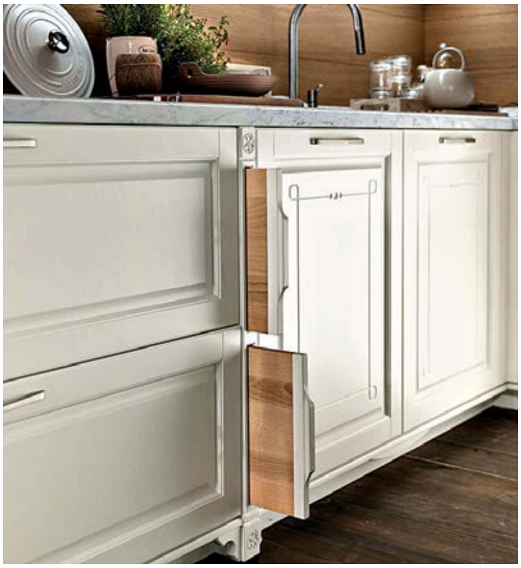
- **Hanging a curtain to hide things** While this is a tad overrated, sometimes you just do not feel up to clearing and organising your kitchen. Use curtains to hide open, hanging shelves so that you can easily take that much needed day off.

- **Drawer organisers are your best friend** Organising cutlery and the smaller utensils is the biggest headache that most people face. The easy solution is to opt for smart drawer organisers. They can be installed in each drawer to provide a practical yet stylish solution.

- **An island should always have drawers** An island without drawers is not a very practical solution. An island will give you that extra storage capacity that you need and add more character to your space.

Before implementing these ideas, it is important to realise and assess what your kitchen needs most. Is it overflowing spice racks, cluttered drawers and cabinets or a messy pantry? It becomes easy when you focus on one area at a time allowing you to be creative and makes sure that you focus on a practical solution rather than a random one. As you go along, you'll realise that it's the small things that add up to give your kitchen that look and feel that we only dream about.

STASH AND STORE
Factory kitchen with island (left); the Contempora kitchen wall features folding doors and drawers to keep the commonly used objects close (below left); Portrait kitchen with cutting board storage sleeves (below right); all available at Ottimo



THE WOW FACTOR

Did you know that cabinets and countertops, while functional are also what make or mar the look of the kitchen? Here's all you need to know about them.

By **DEVIKA KHOSLA**

Whether you use them to stack, stash and store your utensils and food items, or use them to enhance the look of the kitchen, a cabinet is one of the most important spaces in a home. But with the market full of options, it becomes difficult how to zero-in on the perfect one for your cook-room. This is what you need to know before you remodel the heart of your home.

Material Matters

- **Plywood** – The most used and readily available material for the structure of cabinets is plywood. It is made by layering and pasting several layers of wood together, and the total thickness ranges from half an inch to three-fourth inches. Plywood is everyone's preferred choice because of its strength to hold the heavy articles and economic viability. The material can also be used in shutters, but it tends to bend over time and hence is not much preferred.
PRICE ₹120 per sq ft

- **MDF/HDF** – Medium-density fibreboard and high-density fibreboard are two types of engineered wood planks made with wood particles that are bonded together with hot glue under high pressure. Though these do not provide much resistance and have less strength than plywood, they have a smooth finish and can be easily painted upon to give a clean and neat appearance. These are 3-5 mm thick, which is less than plywood; however, they do not bend over time and are preferred for cabinet shutters.
PRICE ₹55 per sq ft

- **Particle Board** - A sustainable option is particleboard, as it is made of sawdust and waste materials that are bonded together. However, it is the least durable and can only be used storing kitchen napkins, tissue rolls, and other softer and light-weighted kitchen items.
PRICE ₹45 per sq ft

GRAND DESIGN
The AV 7070 Copper from Häcker Kitchens (www.haecker-india.com) uses metallic-shiny smoothened lacquer to create drama

COUNTERTOPS, ON CUE

GRANITE This commonly used countertop material works best for Indian kitchens. It is easy to clean and maintain over time as this is scratch and stain-proof. This natural stone is available in a variety of alluring options, from black granite to a dusty brown coloured in both matte and polished options.

QUARTZ This is another beautiful material and alternative to high-end granite. However, it is a little more porous than granite and hence needs to be properly cleaned and maintained and kept cautious of hot vessels and liquids. The material comes in a lot of beautiful colours and patterns to aesthetically complement the kitchen interiors.

NATURAL STONE
These are durable and non-porous and give a beautiful, sustainable look to the kitchen counters. Natural stone is economically low on pockets; however, it tends to gain scratches and stains due to heat and rough cooking with time.

STAINLESS STEEL
A commonly used material in commercial kitchens, stainless steel countertops can be used in residential kitchens to give an industrial look. It is one of the most hygienic options as it can be easily cleaned with a wet cloth. However, heavy utensils sometimes leave dents on the material.

NATURAL WOOD
Natural wood imparts a beautiful cottage or a holiday home look to the kitchen. The material is non-porous, so there is no worry about hot pans and heavy utensils. However, these can observe scratches if used roughly or as a base for chopping. Hence, it is best suitable for dry cooking and can prove to be expensive as well.

OPEN UP
This kitchen by The Works Interiors uses two different cabinet materials and colours

Devika Khosla is the creative director of The Works Interiors, a Delhi-based studio that delivers bespoke furniture, interiors, and architectural spatial arrangements. www.theworksinteriors.com

The Finishing Touch

- **Laminates** - The most popular choice for the kitchen cabinet's finishing material is laminate. The material is light on the pocket and readily available in options varying from matte to glossy and in vivid colours and textures. These are also easy to maintain and clean. **PRICE ₹1,300 per sheet**

- **Acrylic Laminated Sheet**- These are stunning-looking luxurious finishes available in a variety of colours to match the home interior. Though, if the chosen acrylic is highly glossy, it is more likely to leave impressions of finger marks and visible stains. Hence, it requires regular cleaning and maintenance. Additionally, it is heavy on pockets. **PRICE ₹200 per sheet**

- **Membrane** - This is one of the best options for kitchen cabinets as not only is it available in a variety of colours, but it is easy to clean and maintain over time. The material gives an elegant finish to the kitchen and is less expensive than an acrylic finish. **PRICE ₹200 to ₹250 per sq ft**

- **PU finish** - These are painted finishes available in all colours, painted over the shutter—be it plywood, MDF/HDF, or any board. The finish can be customised to either glossy or matte. **PRICE ₹140-₹180 per sq ft**

- **Glass** - Glass shutters give an airy aesthetic and a minimalistic vibe. Functionally, it makes kitchen tasks quicker if the material is transparent, toughened glass. Other options to choose from are high shine glossy stained glass, matte stained glass, or lacquered glass finish. **PRICE ₹200 per sq ft**

- **Solid wood** - Lastly, for a luxurious and traditional look, solid wooden shutters can be installed. The timber can be oakwood, teakwood or walnut wood. These require high maintenance as they ideally should not come in contact with moisture and are expensive. **PRICE ₹400 per sq ft**

**All prices are approximate costs*

The Essentials

From mixers and grinders to juicers and refrigerators, a look at the latest gadgets for your home

MICROWAVE
Bosch's free-standing microwave has programmes across eight categories, including snacks, appetizers, soup, rice and desserts.
PRICE on request

OTG
The Usha Calypso 30L OTG has a turbo convection fan that blows hot air over the food at high velocity. It also has a smart digital display with rotary controls. **PRICE** ₹15,990

DISHWASHER
Bosch's dishwashers come with features such as three-way rackmatic, dosage assist, touch panel, speed option, glass zone, intensive kadhi, and open and dry assist.
PRICE ₹35,000 onwards

BUILT-IN FRIDGE
With a dual cooling system this 300L built-in refrigerator no frost technology and electronic temperature control.
PRICE ₹1,05,990

DISHWASHER
Faber semi integrated dishwasher has excellent washing and drying results in a short space of time.
PRICE ₹25,000 onwards

CUSTOM REFRIGERATOR
Samsung's BESPOKE range of refrigerators offer customised design options to suit your taste. It is available in 4-Door Flex Family Hub and 4-Door Flex French Door models. **PRICE** ₹1,67,990 onwards

MIXER GRINDER
Bajaj's Herculo has a powerful and efficient 1,000W motor to grind tough ingredients. **PRICE** ₹7,975

HAVELLS
HEXO
PULSE
OFF

MIXER GRINDER
Hexo series from Havells has a 1,000W heavy duty copper wired motor with 2.5kg weight grinding tough ingredients into a fine consistency. **PRICE** ₹6,000 to ₹7,500

COOKTOP

Siemens has a wide range of cooktops with intuitive features that make them intelligent, powerful, efficient and elegant, **PRICE** on request

BLENDER

Philips hand blender has a 650W motoreasily blending even the toughest ingre dients. **PRICE** on request

WONDERCHEF
MAX 1000ml
MIN 800ml

SOUP MAKER

Make soups at the touch of a button with the Wonderchef Soup Maker 1L. It heats, boils, and mixes automatically. **PRICE** ₹6,999

WATER PURIFIER

This RO from Faber offers germblock technology which protects the purified stored water from microbial contamination. **PRICE** ₹15,000 onwards

VACUUM CLEANER

Tefal's Power XXL Cannister bagged vacuum cleaner has a large bag capacity of 4.5 litre, and a Effitech motor delivering 2,200W with just 450W consumption. **PRICE** ₹10,999

TRIED AND TESTED

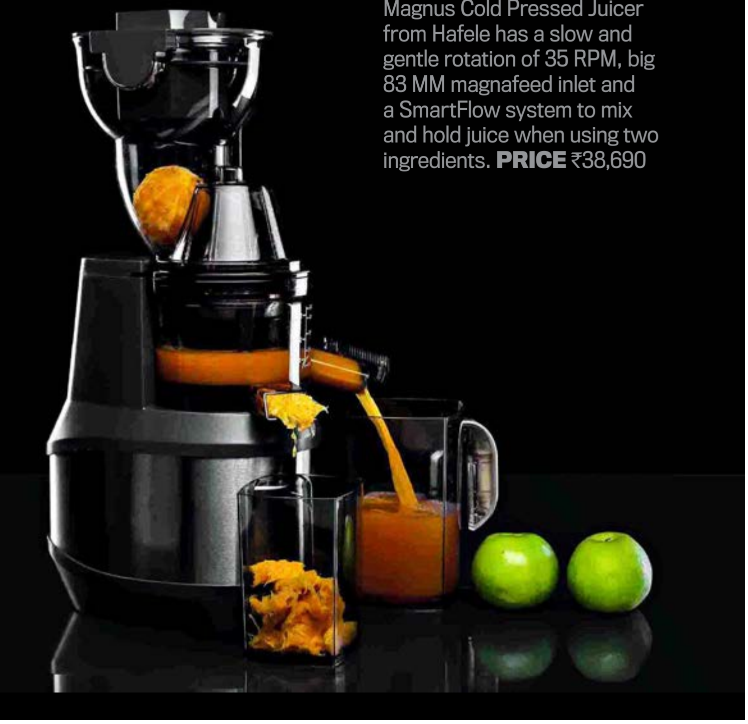
We got our hands on Usha Rice Cooker RC 3718S and loved it. For its price category it's really worth the money. It has a The 1.8L capacity, cooks about 1kg rice and the 700 W pot comes with a two year warranty. The Dual heater function also helps to keep your food warm (in the warm mode). There's also steaming baskets to steam vegetables or other steamed items. The device can also boil and bake. A word of caution the device becomes hot from outside, so be careful when you use it. **PRICE** ₹4,090

USHA
WARM
COOK

JUICER
This Philips juicer comes with a 800 W motor and has a pre-clean function which removes unwanted fibers. **PRICE** ₹12,595

CHIMNEY
Hafele Teresa Cooker Hood comes with smart air sense technology, has a 98 per cent filteration rate and a powerful airflow capacity. **PRICE** ₹47,090

COLD-PRESSED JUICER
Magnus Cold Pressed Juicer from Hafele has a slow and gentle rotation of 35 RPM, big 83 MM magnafeed inlet and a SmartFlow system to mix and hold juice when using two ingredients. **PRICE** ₹38,690



CHIMNEY
Faber has introduces a 3D Chimney with T2S2 technology and three-way suction. The filters on the sides of the hood extract any smoke that escapes the bottom vent. **PRICE** ₹20,000 onwards

cover story
Kitchen | Decor

For that perfect Cuppa

Our expert shares how you can create the perfect coffee and tea station in the heart of your home

By **KUMPAL VAID**

What do you do at home when you get a few minutes to relax? One of my favourite things is to brew a cup of coffee or tea and sit back with a book. It's like a little ritual for many people to start their day by having a fresh cup of coffee or tea. So how can you create a dedicated coffee or tea station in your kitchen? This is what you need to know.

1 Transfer all varieties of coffee and tea into permanent containers such as glass jars, baskets or other containers. Make them easy to see, cute to display, and label them so you can easily tell which one to grab.

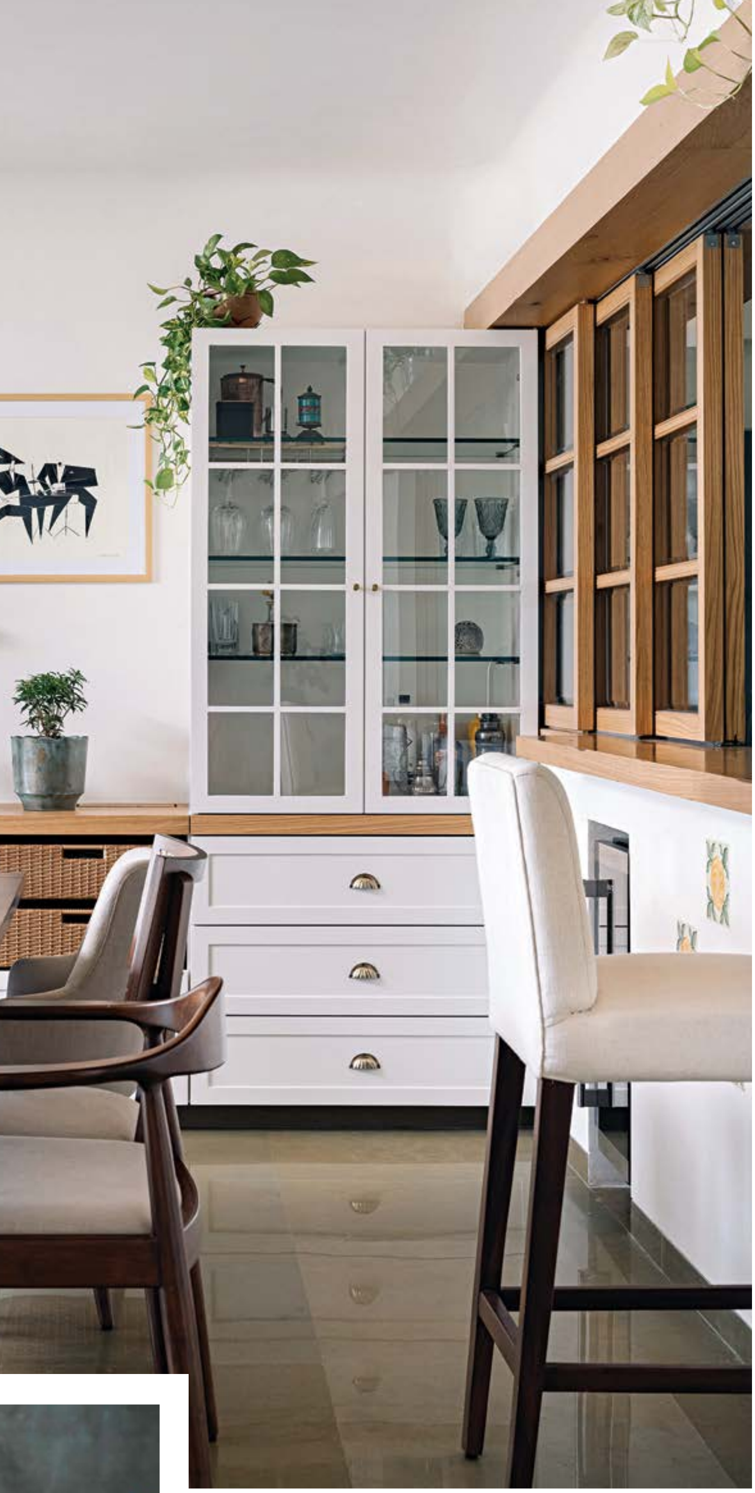
2 Store all spoons, strainers, diffusers, stir sticks, and the like together. Keep them in a cup or tin jar or hang them up on a hook so you don't have to search for them.

3 If you use lemon, honey or cinnamon with your warm drinks, have them handy as well—perhaps in a pretty basket, a honey pot or a vintage teacup on a window sill nearby. And

Kumpal Vaid is the founder and principal designer at Mumbai-based Purple Backyard, an interior design and visual merchandising studio. www. purplebackyard.com

morphy richards

COFFEEZA
COFFEEZA
INTENSO
COFFEEZA



ON YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Morphy Richards Kaffeto Coffee Maker is a a three-in-one coffee machine with flow metre and temperature control, ₹17,995 (bottom left); Coffeeza coffee machine helps make gourmet coffee, ₹13,949 (bottom right); Japanese cast iron teapot from Decor Kart, ₹5,800 (below)

remember to keep filters in the station as well.

4 Stack or hang coffee and teacups with or near the supply station. Consider keeping everything in one or two trays or baskets so it's grouped neatly together.

5 This may seem obvious but keep the station close to the coffee maker and teapot. It'll save you from crisscrossing the kitchen when you're brewing a pot.

6 Invest in a good machine that works well more than the aesthetics. Proper decor can elevate or camouflage any machine or gadget. Try to keep the drink station close to the sink (if you have an outlet there). The closer you are to the water supply, the easier it will be.

7 Use cinnamon or spices according to the season as aroma, such stations generally smell good and are more inviting. Having a dedicated coffee/tea station can add to the character of your kitchen space and make it efficient in terms of utility.

Coffee stations are the need of the hour, given people are working from homes and hence want multiple areas to work from to break away from the routine within the house. A tea/coffee station provides the much-needed respite from that routine.

CASE STUDY

For the Shibui house in Mumbai (above), we created it with the liquor cabinet right next to the kitchen, with a wooden horizontal surface to work on and then the kitchen breakfast ledge and then the dining that also doubles up as a work desk. Materials that can be used to make such counters or areas are: distressed wood, or regular wood with the texture still alive, stainless steel counters are also a hit in terms of maintenance if you find it difficult to keep it clean or organised. Add soft fabric or woven thread lights around the station for a nice calming defused lighting.

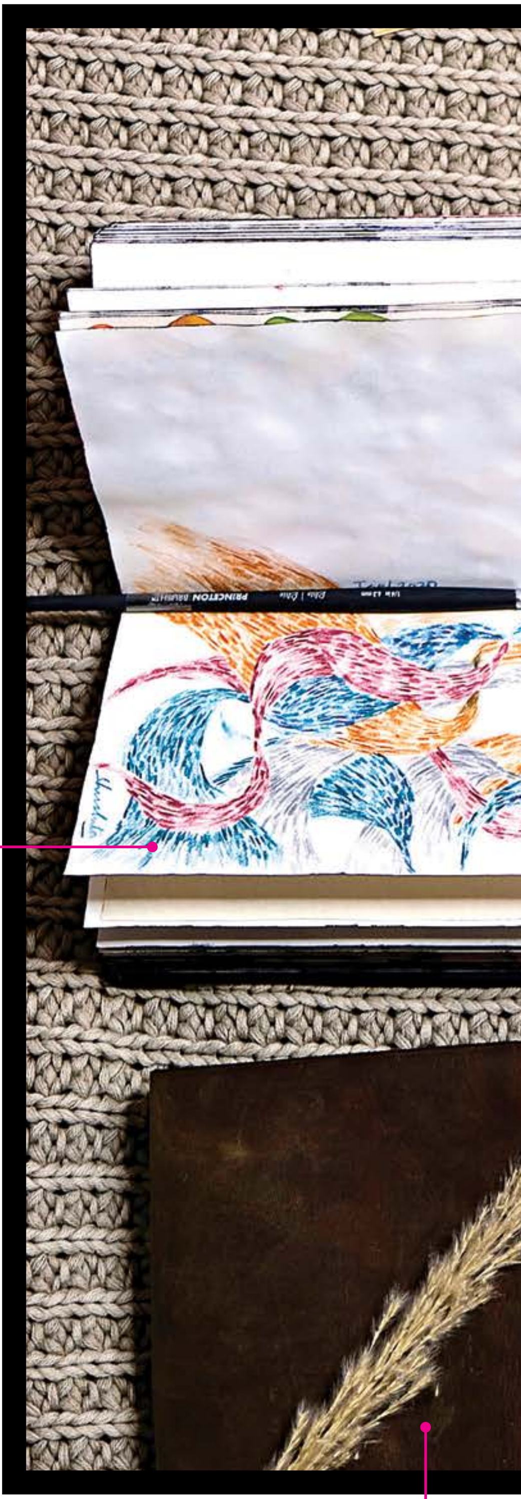
SEASONAL SENSATION

Subtle hints of upcoming winter best define the month of November. So, here's a moodboard to help you map out the colours and textures of this time of the year.

By **SHUCHITA SANCHETI GARG**

It's not too cold, yet foggy mornings and cool evenings make you want to drape yourself is something warm yet comforting. The same applies to your home. Let jewel tones add a harmonious warmth to muted hues. The contrasting dynamic colours give a break to the monochromatic palette. These colours remind you of the onset of sweet winter evenings wrapped in a cosy wool cover, a hot cup of coffee with a good book in hand... that's the November mood.

Shuchita Sancheti Garg is the founder and creative director of vVyom, furnishings studio. She is an interior designer and a self-taught artist with an eye for all things beautiful. www.vvyom.com



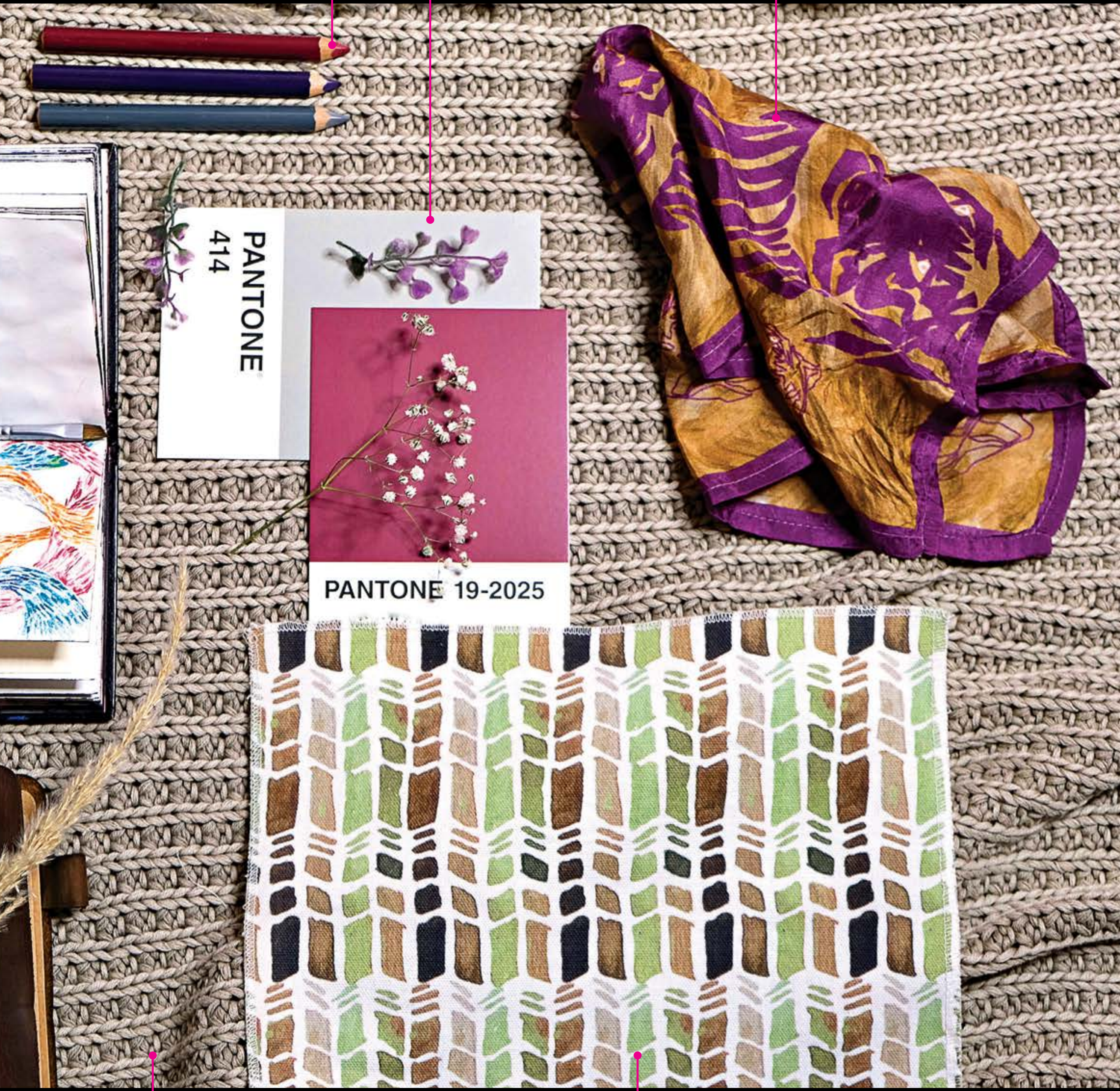
From art to your furnishings get the jewel tones to interact with one another. Let the designs weave a free flowing web of delightful tonal variations.

Think subtle but sophisticated. Play with dark neutrals to bring out the textures and colours of the rest of the space.

These are your secondary colours that will add a sense of whimsy to the room. Use them to highlight vital areas so that they complement the overall scheme.

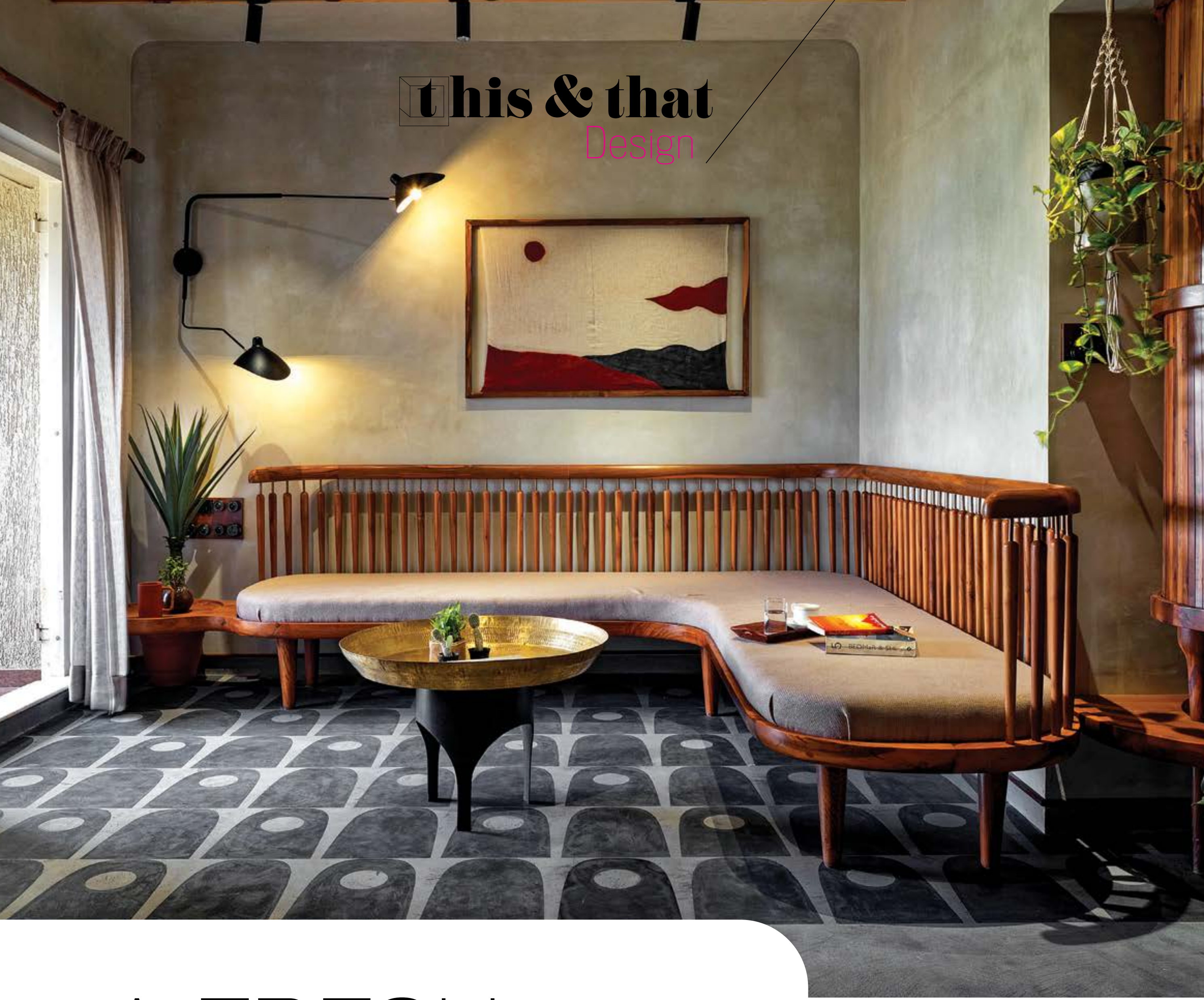
Use these Pantone colours as bold accents in your living spaces. Think cushions, a stencilled wall, bedspread or even an upholstered chair.

Use prints on patterns to create drama in the overall layout of the room. Use on wispy curtains, plush cushions, and gorgeous sofas.



When using neutral tones, texture is essential to add a sense of warmth and depth to the design of a room.

Contrast is key. Use this interesting motif to break away from the solids, while adding a sense of cosy comfort.



A FRESH APPROACH TO OLD DESIGN

In an industry full of copies of one another, an experimental furniture designer is breaking the glass ceiling with her year old brand

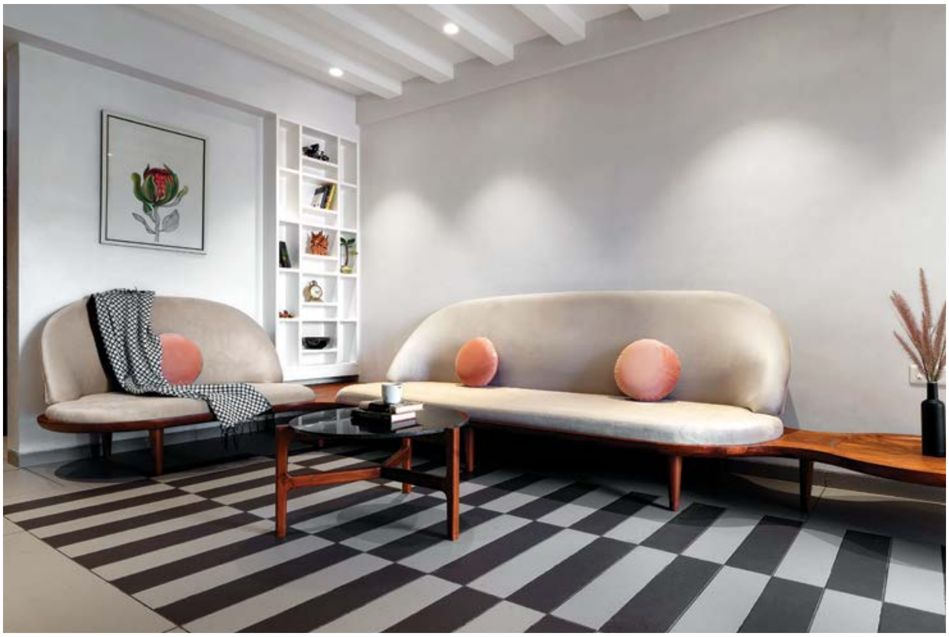
By **RIDHI KALE**

Sleep On This ↑
Designed by Jagoo for client who wanted a sofa where he could take a nap with all the comfort, the Nidra Koch is made from wood and brass. The structure or top view of the sofa is as an abstract leaned human figure.

Eco Warrior →
Designer Sneha Jagoo sits next to the Mrittika stool made of clay, sand and organic waste (such as spent agricultural fibres and cane). The sustainable piece is constructed using an old cob technique. If it breaks or you get bored it, just wet the material and reuse it to sculpt new piece.

There's no denying this—the market is filled with furniture pieces, big or small, cheap or expensive. So, it's natural to feel confused. The good news is that if you are looking for a fresh take on handcrafted furniture, there's finally a great option. Called Sāar by Sneha Jajoo, it occupies that happy space between traditional and modern design with an underlying experimental appeal. "Furniture that illustrates the process and techniques to create a space reflects a persistent exploration of the diverse border zone between harmony and disharmony," says Jajoo, a 28-year-old, Pune-based designer. She started the brand in 2020. "I had been doing freelance work for quite a while and always had a thought of creating my own furniture pieces. I then got an opportunity to design a few pieces for a folk house that's where the idea for starting the brand came in," she says. As for the reason behind the nomenclature of the brand, "Sāar means essence, every piece at Sāar has its own spirit. It is visual and functional essence which gives life to a space," she explains. The USP of the brand is the fact that the pieces are handcrafted by local artisans, bridge the gap between the new and the old, while being fun and innovative.

AT @saar_tfa (Instagram)



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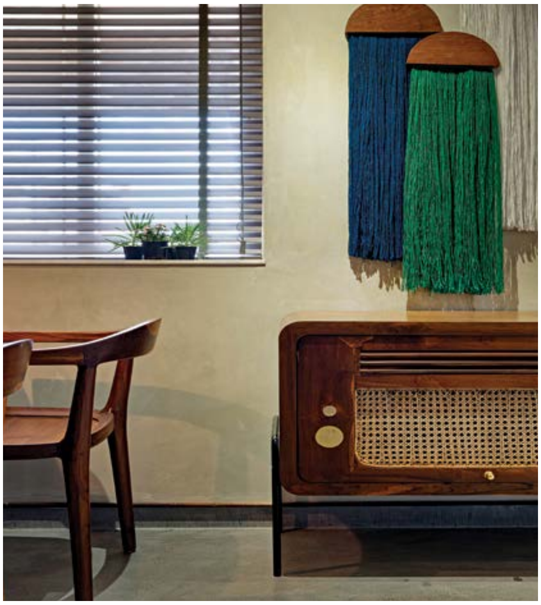
Sofa, So Good

The L-shaped sofa called Plump Koch has a wooden structure that has been upholstered. Playing with curves and reimagining the way we see L-shaped sofa, this furniture piece is designed for a contemporary home.



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Face The Music

Inspired by the vintage radio, Radio Matra uses cane weaving with partial louvered door to create drama. This piece can be used as a storage unit or a small console table. Interstingly, its door opens in such a way that gets completely hidden from view.

1.

2.

3.

GET IT RIGHT

1. Lighting should bring in balance and warmth
2. In the bedroom use natural wood furniture
3. The living area should have sufficient light
4. A neutral colour palette with hints of colour is key in the Japandi aesthetic
5. Introduce fresh greens for that indoor-outdoor feeling

BARE NECESSITIES

Move over maximalism. Japandi with its fuss-free, warm and cosy appeal, clean lines and muted colour palette is here to steal the show.

By **SHELLY ANAND**

There is a lot in common that Japan and Scandinavia have in their design aesthetics. Both cultures value simplistic elegance, share a love for natural materials, and are known for their minimal designs paired with refined craftsmanship. And when design nuances from these two cultures are combined together, a new trend of Japandi (Japanese and Scandi) pops up. A global trend that sits on minimalism, well-lit de-cluttered spaces, a muted colour palette, and that perfect amount of utilitarian objects, Japandi brings together the warmth of Scandinavian design and elegance of Japanese décor. Anjali Mangalgiri, founder and principal architect, GROUNDED, tells us how to introduce the look inside our homes.

First things First

Since the Japandi style is about minimalism, get the bones of the space right. Try and focus on key architectural elements such as doors and windows that can bring natural light and ventilation into the spaces and create access to open spaces such as balconies, verandahs and courtyards.

The second important feature is to de-clutter. Binge on Netflix and 'Marie Condo' your home to organise your belongings, suggests Mangalgiri. Start with a monochromatic palette and design a space layout that is unhindered with ample space for circulation. Choose furniture that is minimal in design and is made using natural materials, such as wood, bamboo, jute, rattan, exposed cement, terracotta, and linen.

Plan for lighting that is not too bright and jarring to the eye. Refrain from adding too many disparate elements to the space.

Get the Look

The Japandi style works well in the living and dining area. The days of having a formal living and dining that is locked up are gone. Instead transform the living room into a family space where there is planned storage for books, newspapers, dining serve ware, and children's toys. Have comfy seating arrangement and a snug yet easy-to-clean rug on the floor that allows for the family to spread out and enjoy time with each other or alone.

The style also works well in intimate spaces, such as the bedrooms and bathrooms. By using a neutral interior palette, removing clutter and focusing on the use of natural materials, these spaces can be transformed into a calm oasis in one's home.

Photographs courtesy: CARLI TETERIS

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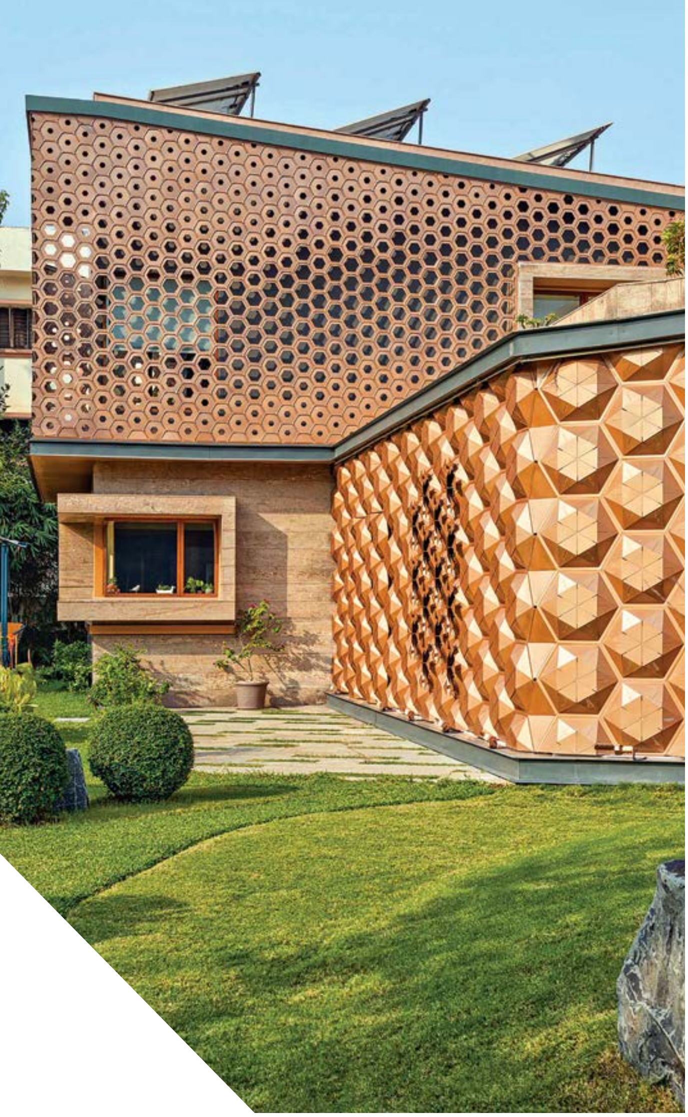


SUSTAINABILITY MEETS TECHNOLOGY

With an outer metal structure inspired by a honeycomb, paired with eco-friendly features and stylish interiors, this unique and spectacular home in Surat is a feast for the eyes

By **MONARCH CHAMPANERI, NILESH GAJERA AND NIRALEE CHAMPANERI**

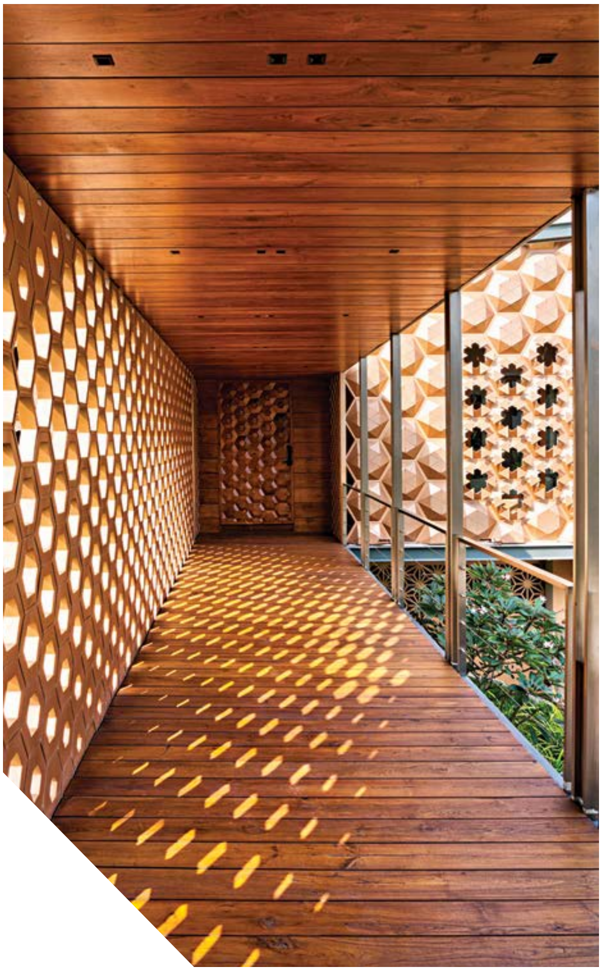
SMART AND SPECTACULAR
(clockwise from extreme left) The changing bio-mimicry façade is inspired by a honeycomb structure; ocean blue tones in the son's bedroom with a custom bed, bench and side table from Porada; the Italian marble flooring juxtaposes well with the Porada sofa and Living Divani chairs and centre table

Photographs by: FABIEN CHARUAU

C

Conceived and designed as an intelligent, adaptable and sustainable family home in Surat, Gujarat, Hive's design is seeded in the profession of the client Kamalbhai Mistry, part of a successful company engaged in making machines for the diamond industry. The site is located in Vesu, an upcoming part of Surat. This particular project was part of four plots taken for the extended Mistry family. Being well-informed about architecture and given his core competency in mechanical engineering, Kamalbhai was very clear about what he wanted as a home—a smart structure rendered in metal and a mono-space living area. He also shared an almost 90-point brief with inputs connected to diverse points—from structure, landscape, planning, materials, sustainability, insulation, HVAC and plumbing, along with entire year's sun path study.

The architectural presence, undoubtedly, is established by the solar sensor-based facade, which lies at an exciting intersection of art and engineering. Its geometry is inspired by the hexagonal structural patterns found in nature such as those of honeycombs and carbon crystals—giving the project its name. Analysed as per the structure, function and mechanism, its design is based on structural strength, transformability and bio mimicry. The unique opening mechanism of the facade positions are derivatives of quality of light exposure and thermal comfort levels inside the house.



600 sq m

GROSS BUILT AREA

PROJECT LOCATION **SURAT**

LEAD ARCHITECTS

MONARCH CHAMPANERI, NILESH GAJERA, NIRALEE CHAMPANERI

DESIGN TEAM

VISHAL PATEL, SAHIL SONI, NISHANT CHAUHAN, JAINIKA PATEL, MANASI HATHIWALA, KASHYAP PARSHALA, ZEB SAIYED

FACADE ENGINEERS

MECHANICAL ENGINEERS - ENSEMBLE, ELECTRONICS - WNEURON

DYNAMIC DESIGN
A Rimadesio dining table and B&B Italia chairs can be seen in the dining room (left); enjoy the play of light and shade in this bridge that leads to the entrance (right)

The internal program has been conceived as open and fluid, both in plan and volume. Devoid of dividing partition walls, the fluid spaces on the ground floor have a sensorial segregation of public, private and semi-private zones through modulations in the outer envelope along with a bespoke sculptural entrance vestibule. The upper level, accessed via a sculptural staircase, accommodates two bedrooms. The connection to greens remains steadfast owing to the presence of a small garden attached to each bedroom.

For us, the speciality of this project lies in the client who was open-minded and intrepid, ready to experiment with ideas that didn't have many precedents. The client viewed this building like a product/machines he deals in, which is why the insistence on 'manufacturing' it flawlessly. He wanted something unique in every detail which put lot of pressure on us to deliver. Therefore, all the ideas that went into its making were backed with intensive research and prototyping.

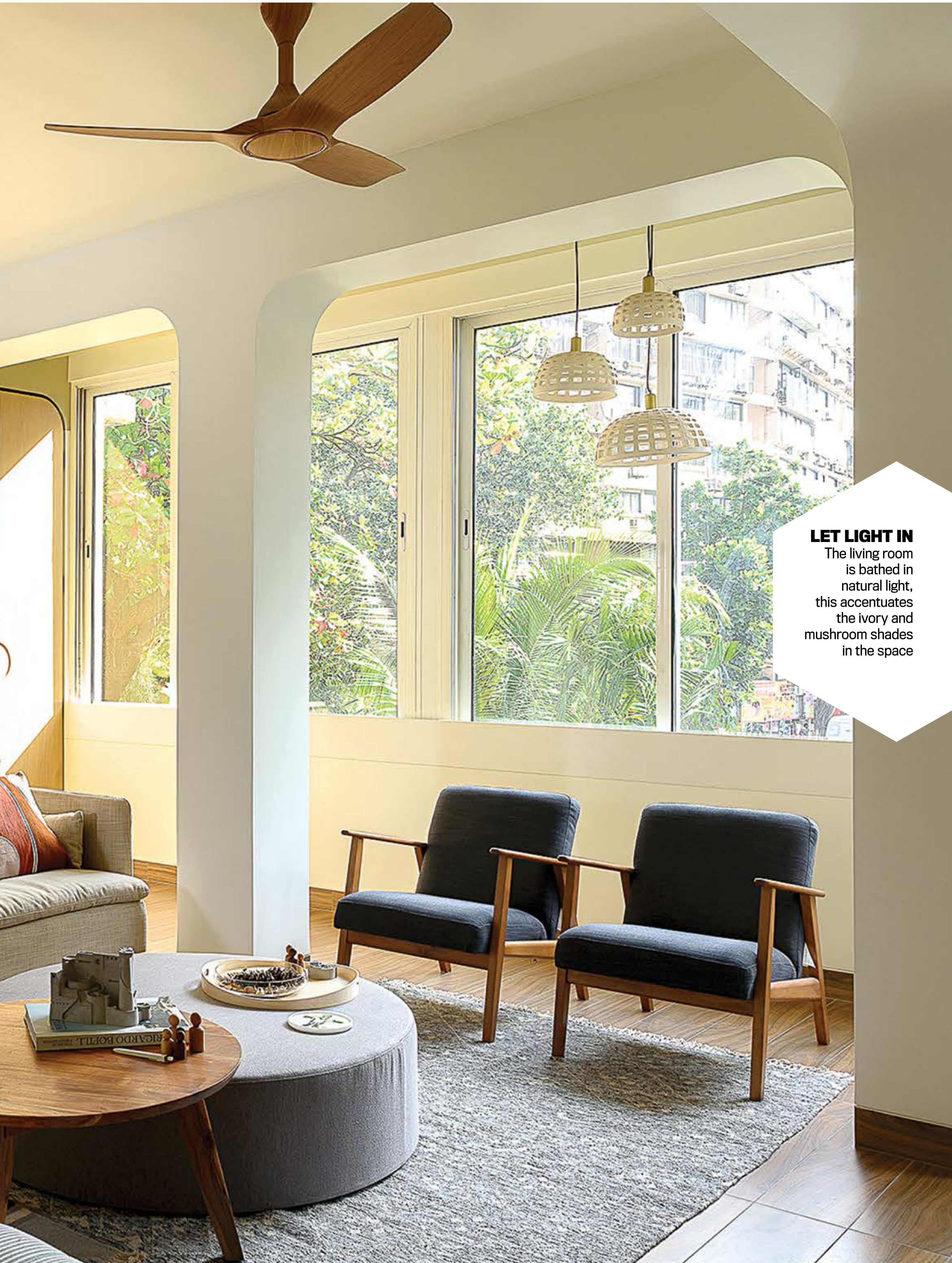
Monarch Champaneri, Nilesh Gajera, Niralee Champaneri are lead at OpenIdeas Architects, a multidisciplinary design studio based in Ahmedabad and Surat started in 2009. www.openideas.co.in

THE RENOVATION PROJECT

A MODERN VERSION OF A DOLL HOUSE, THIS APARTMENT IN MUMBAI IS A LESSON IN HOW CLEVER DESIGN CAN TRANSFORM A HOME

By **HUZEFA RANGWALA AND JASEM PIRANI**

Photographs by: SAMEER TAWDE

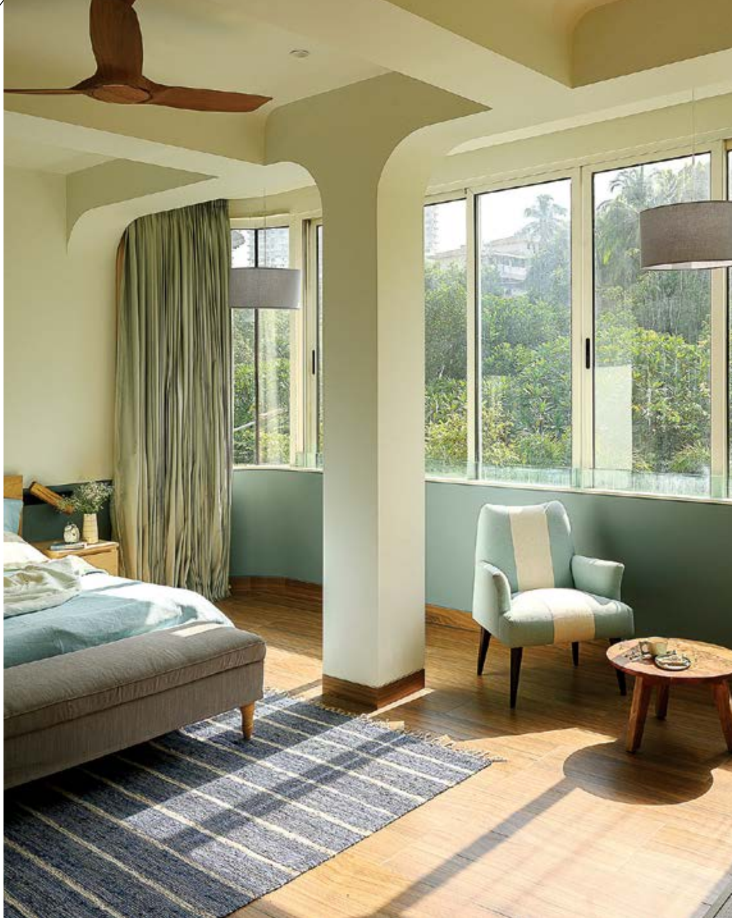


LET LIGHT IN The living room is bathed in natural light, this accentuates the ivory and mushroom shades in the space

Transforming a space is one of the most enriching experiences for a designer. The before-after metamorphosis is not just about the home, it is also (positively) impacts and transforms the lifestyles of the users/inhabitants. Our clients, a young couple purchased a beautiful apartment on the second floor of an old building in South Bombay. The pros—large rooms with great ceiling heights and an abundance of trees and a brief where they wanted the home to have a Scandinavian aesthetic; the cons—there were none.

We demolished the non-structural walls to open-up the space and reconfigure some of the room sizes. This entailed revealing several beams within the rooms. Instead of concealing them within false ceilings, we took the approach of 'heroing' them by rounding their intersections with walls or columns to create a series of portals within the home. Not only did this gesture frame elements beyond the portals, but they also added an identity to the home. The second layer was that of colours, spirited yet soothing, they ranged from ivory and mushroom (in the living room) to blush pink (in the dining and nursery) and base blue (in the master bedroom). The fern green kitchen and children's bathroom complete this rather playful palette of pastels which makes

Principals and partners, Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani founded Mumbai-based MuseLAB, an end-to-end design studio in 2012. They focus on unique and highly customized environments, interiors and furniture. www.muselab.in



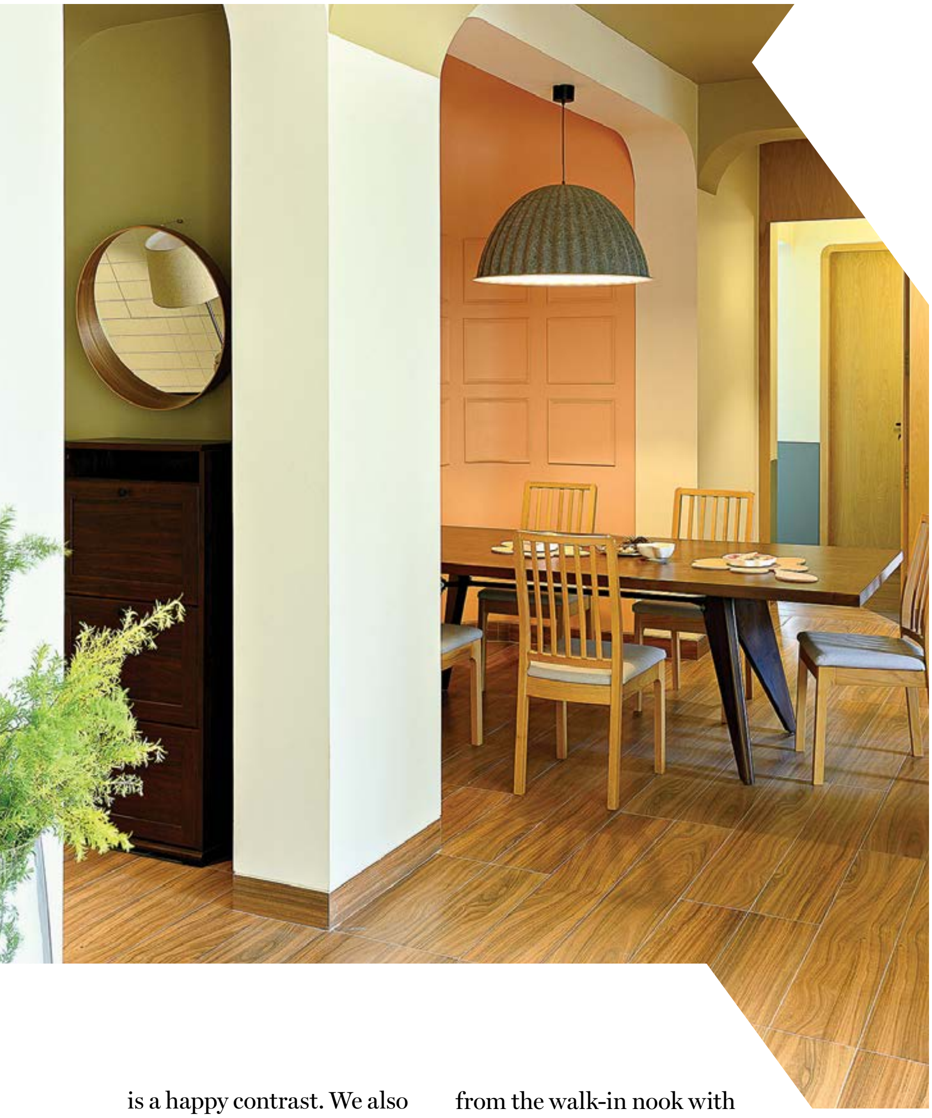
CALMING SPACES
Attention to details can be seen in the nursery (previous page); children's bathroom (left); and the master bedroom (above)

us want to welcome you all to la maison de poupée—our very own rendition of a habitable doll house.

The flooring of the entire home is an interesting arrangement of the same wooden vitrified tile in varying patterns, a design element that can only be deciphered by discerning eyes. The living room is a collection of sofas from Square Barell, armchairs, a media unit from Ikea, rugs from Freedom Tree, a trio of customised suspended lights by Harshita Jhamtani and a built-in bar with back-painted fluted glass shutters. Across from this is the dining nook, a pastiche of classical elements within the otherwise Scandinavian aesthetics. A Square Barrel hardwood table dressed in goodies from Ware Innovations and Petals from her garden is set against Ikea chairs under a 'ballgownesque' dome light dressed in grey velvety flutes.

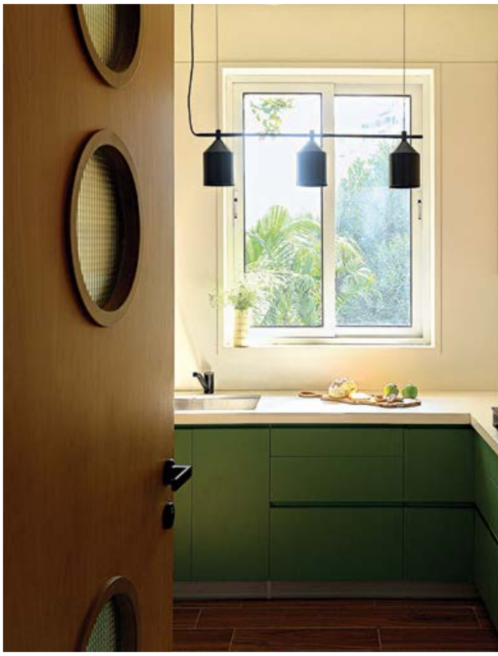
The fern green and oak wood kitchen by The Kitchen Artisan bathes in natural light throughout the day; a perfect opportunity to create a four-port-hole door in fluted glass to let some of that light into the dining nook. Live edge shelves and a Hatsu Bell 3 chandelier complete the vibe of this fun setting.

The nursery is all blush pink. The alcove by the window holds the changing station and a nursing chair. A cot from Swaddle Cove, wall art from MuseLAB and the pikler from Bloom Toys complement each other to form a happy space for the toddler. The fern green bathroom on the other end



FACTFILE

PRINCIPAL DESIGNERS:
HUZEFA RANGWALA, JASEM PIRANI
DESIGN TEAM: HUZEFA RANGWALA, JASEM PIRANI, VAISHNAVI SUBRAMANYAM, HUSSAIN MUKADDAM
AREA: 1,300 SQ FT
LOCATION: NAPEANSEA ROAD, MUMBAI
COMPLETION DATE: SEPTEMBER 2021

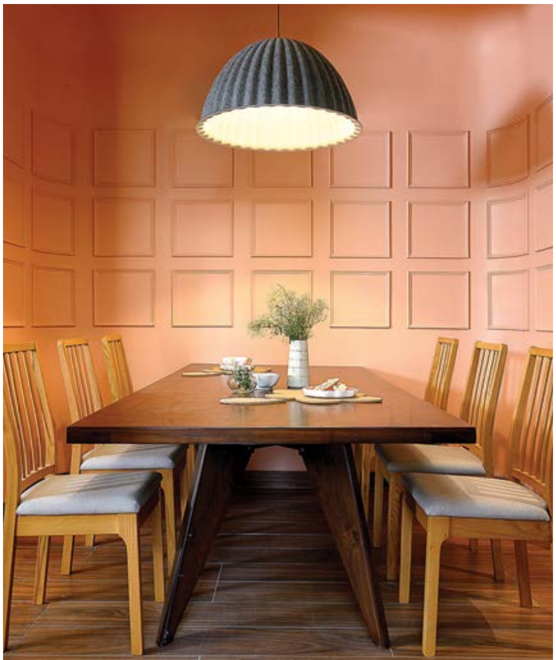


SMART BY DESIGN
The foyer opens into the dining room (left); the minimal kitchen (above); the cosy dining nook (below)

is a happy contrast. We also have Mianzi bamboo mirrors placed here.

The east facing master suite that gets flooded in morning light is the ideal European bed-and-breakfast. The height of the existing window determined the wainscot of base blue that wraps the room and forms the perfect background to the oak wood finished Ikea furniture. A pair of Milan dual armchairs from Gulmohar lane are framed within the arched portal by the window across from the walk-in nook with repurposed wardrobes. The awkwardly shaped but incredibly functional master bath is a cache of tiles in ivory and grey.

This home is infused with fun-loving elements, colours and forms that evoke happiness, positivity, and moments of surprise. It doesn't matter that you are an adult or a toddler, you will gleefully gallivant from one room to another, enjoying the simplistic diversity that is packed into this doll house of a home.



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कहीं भी, कभी भी

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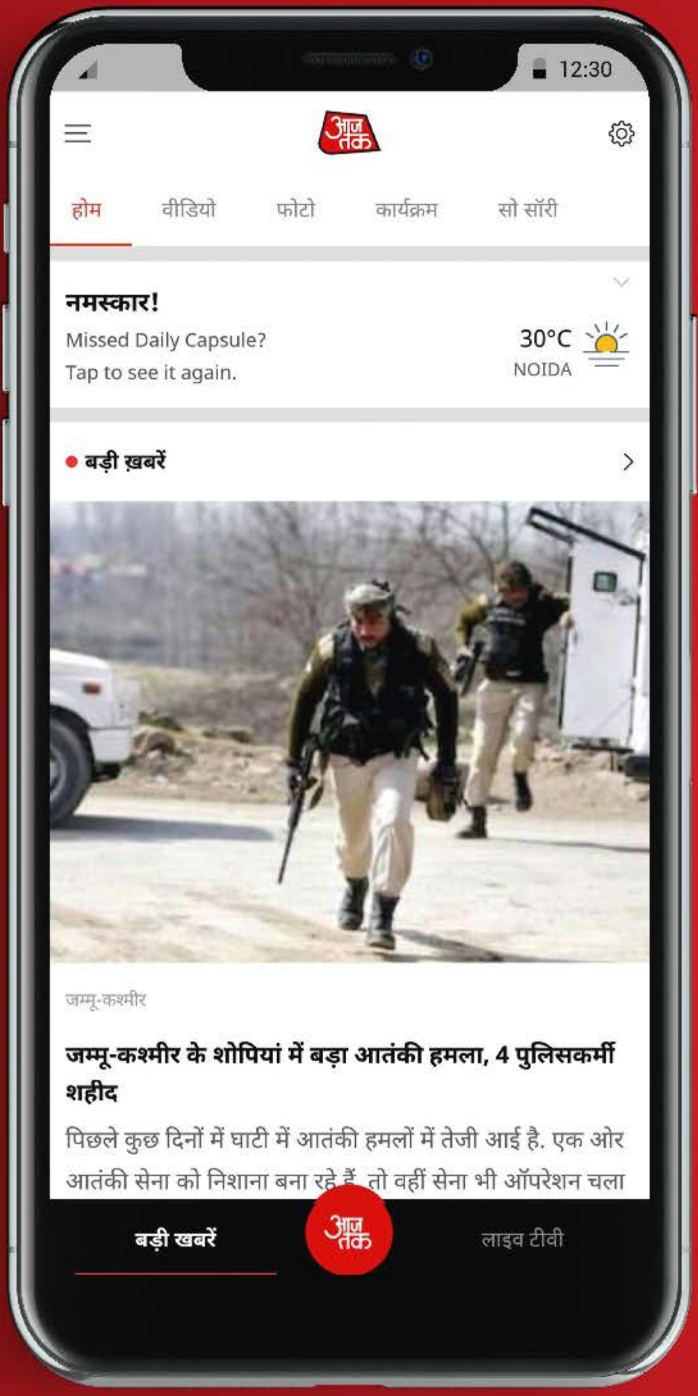

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पिछले कुछ दिनों में घाटी में आतंकी हमलों में तेजी आई है. एक ओर आतंकी सेना को निशाना बना रहे हैं, तो वहीं सेना भी ऑपरेशन चला

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